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HANSARD'S

PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES,

VOL. LXXXIX.

HANSARD'S

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WILLIAM IV.

10° VICTORIÆ, 1847.

VOL. LXXXIX.

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TO

THE FIFTEENTH DAY OF FEBRUARY, 1847.

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1847.

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THE MINISTRY.

IN THE CABINET.

First Lord of the Treasury	Right Hon. Lord John Russell.
Lord Chancellor	Right Hon. Lord Cottenham.
President of the Council	Most Hon. Marquess of Lansdowne.
Privy Seal	Right Hon. Earl of Minto.
Home Secretary	Right Hon. Sir George Grey.
Foreign Secretary	Right Hon. Viscount Palmerston.
Colonial Secretary	Right Hon. Earl Grey.
Chancellor of the Exchequer	Right Hon. Sir Charles Wood.
First Lord of the Admiralty	Right Hon. Earl of Auckland.
President of the Board of Control	Right Hon. Sir John Cam Hobhouse.
President of the Board of Trade	Right Hon. Earl of Clarendon.
Paymaster of the Forces	Right Hon. Thomas Babington Macaulay.
Chief Secretary for Ireland	Right Hon. Henry Labouchere.
Postmaster General	Most Hon. Marquess of Clanricarde.
Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster	Right Hon. Lord Campbell.
Woods and Forests	Right Hon. Viscount Morpeth.

NOT IN THE CABINET.

Commander in Chief	Duke of Wellington.
Master General of the Ordnance	Most Hon. Marquess of Anglesey.
Vice-President of the Board of Trade	Right Hon. T. Milner Gibson.
Secretary of the Admiralty	H. G. Ward, Esq.
Secretary at War	Right Hon. Fox Maule.
Joint Secretaries of the Treasury	J. Parker, Esq. and H. Tufnell, Esq.
Master of the Mint	Right Hon. R. L. Sheil.
Secretaries of the Board of Control	Right Hon. G. S. Byng, and T. Wyse, Esq.
Under Secretary for the Home Department	Sir W. Somerville.
Under Secretary for Foreign Affairs	Right Hon. E. J. Stanley.
Under Secretary for the Colonies	Benjamin Hawes, Esq.
Lords of the Treasury	Viscount Ebrington, The O'Conor Don, William Gibson Craig, Esq., and Henry Rich, Esq.
Lords of the Admiralty	Vice-Admiral Sir Charles Adam, Rear-Admiral J. W. D. Dundas, Hon. Captain M. F. Berkeley, Captain Lord John Hay, and Hon. W. F. Cowper.
Clerk of the Ordnance	Colonel Hon. G. Anson.
Surveyor General of the Ordnance	Colonel Fox.
Attorney General	Sir J. Jervis, Knt.
Solicitor General	D. Dundas, Esq.
Judge-Advocate General	Right Hon. Charles Buller.
Lord Advocate of Scotland	Right Hon. Andrew Rutherfurd.
Solicitor General for Scotland	Thomas Maitland, Esq.

IRELAND.

Lord Lieutenant	Right Hon. Earl of Besborough.
Lord Chancellor	Right Hon. Maziere Brady.
Attorney General	Right Hon. Richard Moore.
Solicitor General	James Henry Monahan, Esq.

QUEEN'S HOUSEHOLD.

Lord Chamberlain	Right Hon. Earl Spencer.
Lord Steward	Right Hon. Earl Fortescue.
Master of the Horse	Duke of Norfolk.
Master of the Buckhounds	Earl Granville.
Vice-Chamberlain	Lord Edward Howard.
Comptroller of the Household	Lord Arthur Marcus Cecil Hill.
Chief Equerry and Clerk Marshal	Lord Alfred Paget.
Mistress of the Robes	Duchess of Sutherland.

ROLL OF THE

LORDS SPIRITUAL AND TEMPORAL

IN THE *SEVENTH SESSION* OF THE *FOURTEENTH PARLIAMENT* OF THE UNITED KINGDOM OF *GREAT BRITAIN* AND *IRELAND.*

10° VICTORIÆ, 1847.

His Royal Highness THE PRINCE of WALES.

His Royal Highness ERNEST AUGUSTUS Duke of CUMBERLAND and TEVIOTDALE. (*King of Hanover.*)

His Royal Highness ADOLPHUS FREDERICK Duke of CAMBRIDGE.

WILLIAM Archbishop of CANTERBURY.

CHARLES CHRISTOPHER Lord COTTENHAM, *Lord Chancellor.*

EDWARD Archbishop of YORK.

RICHARD Archbishop of DUBLIN.

HENRY Marquess of LANSDOWNE, *Lord President of the Council.*

GILBERT Earl of MINTO, *Lord Privy Seal.*

HENRY CHARLES Duke of NORFOLK, *Earl Marshal of England.*

EDWARD ADOLPHUS Duke of SOMERSET.

CHARLES Duke of RICHMOND.

HENRY Duke of GRAFTON.

HENRY Duke of BEAUFORT.

WILLIAM AUBREY DE VERE Duke of SAINT ALBANS.

FRANCIS GODOLPHIN D'ARCY Duke of LEEDS.

FRANCIS Duke of BEDFORD.

WILLIAM SPENCER Duke of DEVONSHIRE.

GEORGE Duke of MARLBOROUGH.

JOHN HENRY Duke of RUTLAND.

ALEXANDER Duke of BRANDON. (*Duke of Hamilton.*)

WILLIAM HENRY CAVENDISH Duke of PORTLAND.

GEORGE Duke of MANCHESTER.

HENRY PELHAM Duke of NEWCASTLE.

HUGH Duke of NORTHUMBERLAND.

ARTHUR Duke of WELLINGTON.

RICHARD PLANTAGENET, Duke of BUCKINGHAM and CHANDOS.

GEORGE GRANVILLE Duke of SUTHERLAND.

HENRY Duke of CLEVELAND.

JOHN Marquess of WINCHESTER.

GEORGE Marquess of TWEEDDALE. (*Elected for Scotland.*)

HENRY Marquess of LANSDOWNE. (*In another place as Lord President of the Council.*)

GEORGE FERRARS Marquess TOWNSHEND.

JAMES BROWNLOW WILLIAM Marquess of SALISBURY.

JOHN ALEXANDER Marquess of BATH.

JAMES Marquess of ABERCORN.

RICHARD Marquess of HERTFORD.

JOHN Marquess of BUTE.

BROWNLOW Marquess of EXETER.

SPENCER JOSHUA ALWYNE Marquess of NORTHAMPTON.

GEORGE CHARLES Marquess CAMDEN.

HENRY WILLIAM Marquess of ANGLESEY.

GEORGE HORATIO Marquess of CHOLMONDELEY.

PAULYN REGINALD SERLO Marquess of HASTINGS.

CHARLES Marquess of AILESBURY.

GEORGE THOMAS JOHN Marquess of WESTMEATH. (*Elected for Ireland.*)

Frederick William Marquess of Bristol.

Archibald Marquess of Ailsa.

John Marquess of Breadalbane.

Richard Marquess of Westminster.

Constantine Henry Marquess of Normanby.

Hugh Earl Fortescue, *Lord Steward of the Household.*

Frederick Earl Spencer, *Lord Chamberlain of the Household.*

John Earl of Shrewsbury.

Edward Earl of Derby.

Francis Theophilus Henry Earl of Huntingdon.

Robert Henry Earl of Pembroke and Montgomery.

William Earl of Devon.

Thomas Earl of Suffolk and Berkshire.

William Basil Percy Earl of Denbigh.

John Earl of Westmoreland.

George Augustus Frederick Albemarle Earl of Lindsey.

George Harry Earl of Stamford and Warrington.

George William Earl of Winchilsea and Nottingham.

George Earl of Chesterfield.

Henry Earl of Thanet.

John William Earl of Sandwich.

Arthur Algernon Earl of Essex.

James Thomas Earl of Cardigan.

George Earl of Carlisle.

Walter Francis Earl of Doncaster. (*Duke of Buccleuch and Queensberry.*)

Cropley Earl of Shaftesbury.

——— Earl of Berkeley.

Montagu Earl of Abingdon.

John Savile Earl of Scarborough.

William Charles Earl of Albemarle.

George William Earl of Coventry.

George Earl of Jersey.

John Earl Poulett.

George Sholto Earl of Morton. (*Elected for Scotland.*)

Cospatrick Alexander Earl of Home. (*Elected for Scotland.*)

David Earl of Airlie. (*Elected for Scotland.*)

David Earl of Leven and Melville. (*Elected for Scotland.*)

Dunbar James Earl of Selkirk. (*Elected for Scotland.*)

Thomas John Earl of Orkney. (*Elected for Scotland.*)

Francis William Earl of Seafield. (*Elected for Scotland.*)

Edward Earl of Oxford and Earl Mortimer.

Washington Sewallis Earl Ferrers.

William Earl of Dartmouth.

Charles Augustus Earl of Tankerville.

Heneage Earl of Aylesford.

George Augustus Earl Cowper.

Philip Henry Earl Stanhope.

Robert Earl of Harborough.

Thomas Earl of Macclesfield.

George William Richard Earl of Pomfret.

James Earl Graham. (*Duke of Montrose.*)

William Earl Waldegrave.

Bertram Earl of Ashburnham.

Charles Earl of Harrington.

John Charles Earl of Portsmouth.

Henry Richard Earl Brooke and Earl of Warwick.

George Robert Earl of Buckinghamshire.

Charles William Earl Fitzwilliam

Francis Earl of Guilford.

James Earl Cornwallis.

Charles Philip Earl of Hardwicke.

Henry Stephen Earl of Ilchester.

George John Earl De Lawarr.

William Earl of Radnor.

Frederick Earl Spencer. (*In another place as Lord Chamberlain of the Household.*)

Henry George Earl Bathurst.

Arthur Wills Blundell Sandys Trumbull Windsor Earl of Hillsborough. (*Marquess of Downshire.*)

George William Frederick Earl of Clarendon.

William David Earl of Mansfield in the County of Nottingham.

William Earl of Abergavenny.

Charles Chetwynd Earl Talbot.

George Augustus Frederick John Earl Strange. (*Duke of Athol.*) (*Lord Glenlyon.*)

Ernest Augustus Earl of Mount Edgcumbe.

Hugh Earl Fortescue. (*In another place as Lord Steward of the Household.*)

Edward Earl of Digby.

George Earl of Beverley.

William David Earl of Mansfield in Middlesex. (*In another place as Earl of Mansfield in the County of Nottingham.*)

Henry John George Earl of Carnarvon.

Charles Cecil Cope Earl of Liverpool.

George Earl Cadogan.

James Howard Earl of Malmesbury.

Francis William Earl of Charlemont. (*Lord Charlemont.*) (*Elected for Ireland.*)

Stephen Earl of Mount Cashell. (*Elected for Ireland.*)

John Earl of Mayo. (*Elected for Ireland.*)

John Earl of Erne. (*Elected for Ireland.*)

John Otway O'Connor Earl of Desart. (*Elected for Ireland.*)

William Earl of Wicklow. (*Elected for Ireland.*)

George Charles Earl of Lucan. (*Elected for Ireland.*)

James Earl of Bandon. (*Elected for Ireland.*)

James Dupre Earl of Caledon. (*Elected for Ireland.*)

James Alexander Earl of Rosslyn.

William Earl of Craven.

Arthur George Earl of Onslow.

Charles Earl of Romney.

Henry Thomas Earl of Chichester.

Thomas Earl of Wilton.

Edward Earl of Powis.

Horatio Earl Nelson.

Archibald Earl of Gosford. (*Lord Worlingham.*) (*Elected for Ireland.*)

William Earl of Rosse. (*Elected for Ireland.*)

Charles William Earl of Charleville. (*Elected for Ireland.*)

Charles Herbert Earl Manvers.

Horatio Earl of Orford.

Henry Earl Grey.

William Earl of Lonsdale.

Dudley Earl of Harrowby.

Henry Earl of Harewood.

Gilbert Earl of Minto. (*In another place as Lord Privy Seal.*)

Charles Murray Earl Cathcart.

James Walter Earl of Verulam.

John Earl Brownlow.

Edward Granville Earl of Saint Germans.

Edmund Earl of Morley.

George Augustus Frederick Henry Earl of Bradford.

John Reginald Earl Beauchamp.

Richard Earl of Glengall. (*Elected for Ireland.*)

Thomas Philip Earl De Grey.

John Earl of Eldon.

George Henry Earl of Falmouth.

Richard William Penn Earl Howe.

John Sommers Earl Sommers.

John Edward Cornwallis Earl of Stradbroke.

Windham Henry Earl of Dunraven. (*Elected for Ireland.*)

Charles William Earl Vane. (*Marquess of Londonderry.*)

William Pitt Earl Amherst.

John Frederick Earl Cawdor.

William George Earl of Munster.

William Earl of Burlington.

Robert Earl of Camperdown.

Thomas William Earl of Lichfield.

George Frederick D'Arcy Earl of Durham.

Frederick John Earl of Ripon.

Granville George Earl Granville.

Henry Earl of Effingham.

Henry George Francis Earl of Ducie.

Charles Anderson Worsley Earl of Yarborough.

James Henry Robert Earl Innes. (*Duke of Roxburgh*)

Thomas William Earl of Leicester.

William Earl of Lovelace.

Thomas Earl of Zetland.

George Earl of Auckland.

Charles Noel Earl of Gainsborough.

William Fitzhardinge Earl Fitzhardinge.

Edward Earl of Ellenborough.

Francis Earl of Ellesmere.

Robert Viscount Hereford.

John Viscount Arbuthnott. (*Elected for Scotland.*)

James Viscount Strathallan. (*Elected for Scotland.*)

Henry Viscount Bolingbroke and St. John.

George Viscount Torrington.

Augustus Frederick Viscount Leinster. (*Duke of Leinster.*)

HENRY Viscount MAYNARD.

JOHN ROBERT Viscount SIDNEY.

FRANCIS WHELER Viscount HOOD.

JOHN Viscount DE VESCI. (*Elected for Ireland.*)

HAYES Viscount DONERAILE. (*Elected for Ireland.*)

CORNWALLIS Viscount HAWARDEN. (*Elected for Ireland.*)

JOHN BRUCE RICHARD Viscount O'NEILL. (*Elected for Ireland.*)

EDWARD JERVIS Viscount ST. VINCENT.

ROBERT Viscount MELVILLE.

WILLIAM LEONARD Viscount SIDMOUTH.

ROBERT EDWARD Viscount LORTON. (*Elected for Ireland.*)

WARWICK Viscount LAKE.

GEORGE Viscount GORDON. (*Earl of Aberdeen.*)

EDWARD Viscount EXMOUTH.

JOHN HELY Viscount HUTCHINSON. (*Earl of Donoughmore.*)

WILLIAM CARR Viscount BERESFORD.

WILLIAM THOMAS Viscount CLANCARTY. (*Earl of Clancarty.*)

STAPLETON Viscount COMBERMERE.

CHARLES JOHN Viscount CANNING.

CHARLES JOHN Viscount CANTERBURY.

JOHN Viscount PONSONBY.

ROWLAND Viscount HILL.

HENRY Viscount HARDINGE.

CHARLES JAMES Bishop of LONDON.

EDWARD Bishop of DURHAM.

CHARLES RICHARD Bishop of WINCHESTER.

JOHN Bishop of LINCOLN.

CHRISTOPHER Bishop of BANGOR.

HUGH Bishop of CARLISLE.

GEORGE Bishop of ROCHESTER.

EDWARD Bishop of LLANDAFF.

JOHN BIRD Bishop of CHESTER.

RICHARD Bishop of BATH and WELLS.

JAMES HENRY Bishop of GLOUCESTER and BRISTOL.

HENRY Bishop of EXETER.

CHARLES THOMAS Bishop of RIPON.

EDWARD Bishop of SALISBURY.

EDWARD Bishop of NORWICH.

THOMAS Bishop of HEREFORD.

GEORGE Bishop of PETERBOROUGH.

CONNOP Bishop of ST. DAVID'S.

HENRY Bishop of WORCESTER.

ASHURST TURNER Bishop of CHICHESTER.

JOHN Bishop of LICHFIELD.

THOMAS Bishop of ELY.

SAMUEL Bishop of OXFORD.

THOMAS VOWLER Bishop of ST. ASAPH.

RICHARD Bishop of DOWN, CONNOR, and DROMORE.

JAMES Bishop of OSSORY, FERNS, and LEIGHLIN.

SAMUEL Bishop of CLOYNE, CORK, and ROSS.

WILLIAM LENNOX LASCELLES Lord DE ROS.

JACOB Lord HASTINGS.

GEORGE EDWARD Lord AUDLEY.

PETER ROBERT Lord WILLOUGHBY DE ERESBY.

THOMAS Lord DACRE.

CHARLES RODOLPH Lord CLINTON.

THOMAS Lord CAMOYS.

MILES THOMAS Lord BEAUMONT.

CHARLES Lord STOURTON.

HENRY Lord BERNERS.

HENRY PEYTO Lord WILLOUGHBY DE BROKE.

GEORGE Lord VAUX of HARROWDEN.

HENRY Lord PAGET.

ST. ANDREW BEAUCHAMP Lord ST. JOHN of BLETSO.

CHARLES AUGUSTUS Lord HOWARD DE WALDEN.

WILLIAM FRANCIS HENRY Lord PETRE.

WILLIAM THOMAS Lord SAYE and SELE.

HENRY BENEDICT Lord ARUNDELL of WARDOUR.

JOHN Lord CLIFTON. (*Earl of Darnley.*)

JOSEPH THADDEUS Lord DORMER.

GEORGE HENRY Lord TEYNHAM.

GEORGE WILLIAM Lord STAFFORD.

GEORGE ANSON Lord BYRON.

WILLIAM Lord WARD.

HUGH CHARLES Lord CLIFFORD of CHUDLEIGH.

ALEXANDER GEORGE Lord SALTOUN. (*Elected for Scotland.*)

JOHN Lord GRAY. (*Elected for Scotland.*)

CHARLES Lord SINCLAIR. (*Elected for Scotland.*)

JOHN Lord COLVILLE of CULROSS. (*Elected for Scotland.*)

ERIC Lord REAY. (*Elected for Scotland.*)

HENRY FRANCIS Lord POLWARTH. (*Elected for Scotland.*)

EDMUND Lord BOYLE. (*Earl of Cork and Orrery.*)

THOMAS ROBERT Lord HAY. (*Earl of Kinnoul.*)

DIGBY Lord MIDDLETON.

WILLIAM JOHN Lord MONSON.

HENRY Lord MONTFORT.

GEORGE WILLIAM FREDERICK Lord BRUCE.

JOHN WILLIAM Lord PONSONBY. (*Earl of Bessborough.*)

GEORGE JOHN Lord SONDES.

NATHANIEL Lord SCARSDALE.

GEORGE Lord BOSTON.

HENRY EDWARD Lord HOLLAND.

GEORGE JAMES Lord LOVEL and HOLLAND. (*Earl of Egmont.*)

GEORGE JOHN Lord VERNON.

JOHN DOUGLAS EDWARD HENRY Lord SUNDRIDGE. (*Duke of Argyll.*)

EDWARD WILLIAM Lord HAWKE.

THOMAS HENRY Lord FOLEY.

GEORGE TALBOT Lord DYNEVOR.

THOMAS Lord WALSINGHAM.

WILLIAM Lord BAGOT.

CHARLES Lord SOUTHAMPTON.

FLETCHER Lord GRANTLEY.

ROBERT DENNETT Lord RODNEY.

JOHN Lord CARTERET.

RICHARD NOEL Lord BERWICK.

JOHN Lord SHERBORNE.

HENRY Lord TYRONE. (*Marquess of Waterford.*)

RICHARD Lord CARLETON. (*Earl of Shannon.*)

EDWARD Lord SUFFIELD.

GUY Lord DORCHESTER.

GEORGE Lord KENYON.

RICHARD Lord BRAYBROOKE.

GEORGE HAMILTON Lord FISHERWICK. (*Marquess of Donegal.*)

CHARLES Lord DOUGLAS of DOUGLAS.

HENRY HALL Lord GAGE. (*Viscount Gage.*)

EDWARD THOMAS Lord THURLOW.

GEORGE WILLIAM Lord LYTTELTON.

HENRY Lord MENDIP. (*Viscount Clifden.*)

FRANCIS Lord STUART of CASTLE STUART. (*Earl of Moray.*)

RANDOLPH Lord STEWART of GARLIES. (*Earl of Galloway.*)

JAMES THOMAS Lord SALTERSFORD. (*Earl of Courtown.*)

GEORGE ALAN Lord BRODRICK. (*Viscount Midleton.*)

GEORGE Lord CALTHORPE.

ROBERT JOHN Lord CARRINGTON.

HENRY Lord BAYNING.

WILLIAM POWLETT Lord BOLTON.

JOHN Lord WODEHOUSE.

JOHN Lord NORTHWICK.

THOMAS ATHERTON Lord LILFORD.

THOMAS Lord RIBBLESDALE.

JOHN Lord FITZGIBBON. (*Earl of Clare.*)

EDWARD WADDING Lord DUNSANY. (*Elected for Ireland.*)

CADWALLADER DAVIS Lord BLAYNEY. (*Elected for Ireland.*)

HENRY Lord FARNHAM. (*Elected for Ireland.*)

ROBERT Lord CLONBROCK. (*Elected for Ireland.*)

EDWARD Lord CROFTON. (*Elected for Ireland.*)

HENRY Lord DUNALLEY. (*Elected for Ireland.*)

HENRY FRANCIS SEYMOUR Lord MOORE. (*Marquess of Drogheda.*)

JOHN HENRY LOFTUS Lord LOFTUS. (*Marquess of Ely.*)

JOHN Lord CARYSFORT. (*Earl of Carysfort.*)

WILLIAM Lord ALVANLEY.

GEORGE RALPH Lord ABERCROMBY.

JOHN THOMAS Lord REDESDALE.

GEORGE Lord RIVERS.

ARTHUR MOYSES WILLIAM Lord SANDYS.

GEORGE AUGUSTUS FREDERICK CHARLES Lord SHEFFIELD. (*Earl of Sheffield.*)

DAVID MONTAGU Lord ERSKINE.

GEORGE JOHN Lord MONT EAGLE. (*Marquess of Sligo.*)

ARCHIBALD WILLIAM Lord ARDROSSAN. (*Earl of Eglintoun.*)

JAMES Lord LAUDERDALE. (*Earl of Lauderdale.*)

GEORGE ARTHUR HASTINGS Lord GRANARD. (*Earl of Granard.*)

HUNGERFORD Lord CREWE.

ALAN LEGGE Lord GARDNER.

JOHN THOMAS Lord MANNERS.

JOHN ALEXANDER Lord HOPETOUN. (*Earl of Hopetoun.*)

RICHARD Lord CASTLEMAINE. (*Elected for Ireland.*)

James Andrew Lord Dalhousie. (*Earl of Dalhousie.*)

George Lord Meldrum. (*Marquess of Huntly.*)

James Lord Ross. (*Earl of Glasgow.*)

William Willoughby Lord Grinstead. (*Earl of Enniskillen.*)

William Henry Tennison Lord Foxford. (*Earl of Limerick.*)

Francis George Lord Churchill.

William Lord Melbourne. (*Viscount Melbourne.*)

George Francis Robert Lord Harris.

Algernon Lord Prudhoe.

Charles Lord Colchester.

William Schomberg Robert Lord Ker. (*Marquess of Lothian.*)

Francis Nathaniel Lord Minster. (*Marquess Conyngham.*)

John Lord Ormonde. (*Marquess of Ormonde.*)

Francis Lord Wemyss. (*Earl of Wemyss.*)

Robert Lord Clanbrassill. (*Earl of Roden.*)

Robert Lord Kingston. (*Earl of Kingston.*)

Edward Michael Lord Silchester. (*Earl of Longford.*)

George Augustus Federick John Lord Glenlyon. (*In another place as Earl Strange.*) (*Duke of Athol.*)

William Lord Maryborough. (*Earl of Mornington.*)

John Lord Oriel. (*Viscount Massarene and Ferrard.*)

Thomas Henry Lord Ravensworth.

Thomas Lord Delamere.

John George Weld Lord Forester.

John James Lord Rayleigh.

Ulysses Lord Downes. (*Elected for Ireland.*)

Nicholas Lord Bexley.

Robert Francis Lord Gifford.

Percy Clinton Sydney Lord Penshurst. (*Viscount Strangford.*)

Ulick John Lord Somerhill. (*Marquess of Clanricarde.*)

James Lord Wigan. (*Earl of Balcarres.*)

Thomas Lord Ranfurly. (*Earl of Ranfurly.*)

George Lord De Tabley.

John Lord Wharncliffe.

William Lord Feversham.

John Singleton Lord Lyndhurst.

James Lord Fife. (*Earl of Fife.*)

John Henry Lord Tenterden.

William Conyngham Lord Plunket.

Thomas Lord Melros. (*Earl of Haddington.*)

Henry Lord Cowley.

William Lord Heytesbury.

Archibald John Lord Rosebery. (*Earl of Rosebery.*)

Richard Lord Clanwilliam. (*Earl of Clanwilliam.*)

Edward Lord Skelmersdale.

William Samuel Lord Wynford.

Henry Lord Brougham and Vaux.

William Henry Lord Kilmarnock. (*Earl of Erroll.*)

Arthur James Lord Fingall. (*Earl of Fingall.*)

Charles William Lord Sefton. (*Earl of Sefton.*)

Nathaniel Lord Clements. (*Earl of Leitrim.*)

George William Fox Lord Rossie. (*Lord Kinnaird.*)

Thomas Lord Kenlis. (*Marquess of Headfort.*)

John Chambre Lord Chaworth. (*Earl of Meath.*)

Charles Adolphus Lord Dunmore. (*Earl of Dunmore.*)

Robert Montgomery Lord Hamilton. (*Lord Belhaven and Stenton.*)

John Hobart Lord Howden.

William Lord Panmure.

George Warwick Lord Poltimore.

Edward Price Lord Mostyn.

Henry Spencer Lord Templemore.

William Lewis Lord Dinorben.

Valentine Browne Lord Cloncurry.

James Lord De Saumerez.

Francis Godolphin Lord Godolphin.

Lucius Lord Hunsdon. (*Viscount Falkland.*)

Edward Geoffrey Lord Stanley.

Thomas Lord Denman.

Robert Campbell Lord Abinger.

Philip Charles Lord De L'Isle and Dudley.

Alexander Lord Ashburton.

Charles Lord Glenelg.

Edward John Lord Hatherton.

John Lord Strafford.

Archibald Lord Worlingham. (*In another place as Earl of Gosford.*)

Charles Christopher Lord Cottenham. (*In another place as Lord Chancellor.*)

Henry Lord Langdale.

Edward Berkeley Lord Portman.

Thomas Alexander Lord Lovat.

William Lord Bateman.

Francis William Lord Charlemont. (*In another place as Earl of Charlemont.*)

Francis Alexander Lord Kintore. (*Earl of Kintore.*)

Cornelius Lord Lismore. (*Viscount Lismore.*)

Henry Robert Lord Rossmore.

Robert Shapland Lord Carew.

William Francis Spencer Lord De Mauley.

John Lord Wrottesley.

Charles Lord Sudeley.

Paul Lord Methuen.

Frederic James Lord Beauvale.

Richard Wogan Lord Furnival. (*Lord Talbot of Malahide.*)

John Thomas Lord Stanley of Alderley.

Henry Lord Stuart de Decies.

Chandos Lord Leigh.

Paul Beilby Lord Wenlock.

Charles Lord Lurgan.

Nicholas William Lord Colborne.

Arthur Lord De Freyne.

James Lord Dunfermline.

Thomas Lord Monteagle of Brandon.

John Lord Seaton.

Edward Arthur Wellington Lord Keane.

John Lord Campbell.

John Lord Oxenfoord. (*Earl of Stair.*)

Valentine Lord Kenmare. (*Earl of Kenmare.*)

Charles Crespigny Lord Vivian.

John Lord Congleton.

Hugh Lord Gough.

Mem.—*According to the Usage of Parliament, when the House appoints a Select Committee, the Lords appointed to serve upon it are named in the Order of their Rank, beginning with the Highest; and so, when the House sends a Committee to a Conference with the Commons, the Lord highest in Rank is called first, and the rest go forth in like Order: But when the Whole House is called over for any Purpose within the House, or for the Purpose of proceeding forth to Westminster Hall, or upon any public Solemnity, the Call begins invariably with the Junior Baron.*

LIST OF THE COMMONS.

LIST OF MEMBERS

Returned from the respective Counties, Cities, Towns, and Boroughs, to the *Fourteenth Parliament* of the United Kingdom of *Great Britain and Ireland*: Amended to the Opening of the *Seventh Session*, on the 19th Day of January, 1847.

ABINGDON.
Sir Frederic Thesiger, knt.

ANDOVER.
Ralph Etwall,
Hon. (William Paget) Lord W. Paget.

ANGLESEY.
Hon. William Owen Stanley.

ARUNDEL.
Hon. Henry Granville (Howard) Earl of Arundel and Surrey.

ASHBURTON.
James Matheson.

ASHTON-UNDER-LINE.
Charles Hindley.

AYLESBURY.
Charles John Baillie Hamilton,
Rice Richard Clayton.

BANBURY.
Henry William Tancred.

BARNSTAPLE.
Frederick Hodgson,
Montague Gore.

BATH.
Hon. Adam (Duncan) Viscount Duncan,
John Arthur Roebuck.

BEAUMARIS.
Frederick Paget.

BEDFORDSHIRE.
Hon. John Hume (Cust) Viscount Alford,
William Astell.

BEDFORD.
Frederick Polhill,
Henry Stuart.

BERKSHIRE.
Robert Palmer,
Philip Pusey,
Rt. hon. William Keppel Viscount Barrington.

BERWICK-UPON-TWEED.
Richard Hodgson,
Matthew Forster.

BEVERLEY.
John Towneley,
Sir James Weir Hogg, bt.

BEWDLEY.
Sir Thomas Edward Winnington, bt.

BIRMINGHAM.
George Frederick Muntz,
Richard Spooner.

BLACKBURN.
Sir William Fielden, bt.,
John Hornby.

BODMIN.
Sir Samuel Thomas Spry, knt.
John Dunn Gardner.

BOLTON-LE-MOORS.
Peter Ainsworth,
John Bowring.

BOSTON.
John Studholme Brownrigg,
Sir James Duke, knt.

BRADFORD.
John Hardy,
William Busfeild.

BRECKNOCKSHIRE.
Thomas Wood.

BRECKNOCK.
Sir Charles Morgan Robinson Morgan, bt.

BRIDGENORTH.
Thos. Charlton Whitmore,
Sir Robert Pigot, bt.

BRIDGEWATER.
Henry Broadwood,
Thomas Seaton Forman.

BRIDPORT.
Thomas Alexander Mitchell,
John Romilly.

BRIGHTON.
George Richard Pechell,
Hon. (Alfred Hervey) Lord A. Hervey.

BRISTOL.
Philip William Skynner Miles,
Hon. Francis Henry Fitzhardinge Berkeley.

BUCKINGHAMSHIRE.
Caledon George Du Pré,
Christopher Tower,
Hon. William Edward Fitzmaurice.

BUCKINGHAM.
Hon. Richard Plantagenet Campbell (Chandos-Grenville) Marquess of Chandos,
John Hall.

BURY.
Richard Walker.

BURY ST. EDMUND'S.
Hon. Frederick William (Hervey) Earl Jermyn,
Rt. Hon. (Charles Fitzroy) Lord C. Fitzroy.

CALNE.
Hon. Henry (Petty Fitzmaurice) Earl of Shelburne.

CAMBRIDGESHIRE.
Hon. Eliot Thomas Yorke,
Richard Jefferson Eaton,
John Peter Allix.

CAMBRIDGE.
Hon. John Henry Thomas Manners Sutton,
Sir FitzRoy Kelly, knt.

CAMBRIDGE (UNIVERSITY).
Rt. hon. Henry Goulburn,
Hon. Charles Ewan Law.

CANTERBURY.

Hon. George Augustus Percy Sydney Smythe,
James Bradshaw.

CARDIFF.

Rt. hon. John Iltid Nicholl.

CARDIGANSHIRE.

William Edward Powell.

CARDIGAN.

Pryse Pryse.

CARLISLE.

Philip Henry Howard,
William Marshall.

CARMARTHENSHIRE.

Hon. George Rice Rice Trevor,
David Arthur Saunders Davies.

CARMARTHEN.

David Morris.

CARNARVONSHIRE.

Hon. Edward Gordon Douglas Pennant.

CARNARVON.

William Bulkeley Hughes.

CHATHAM.

Rt. hon. George Stevens Byng.

CHELTENHAM.

Hon. Craven Fitzhardinge Berkeley.

CHESHIRE.

(Northern Division.)

William Tatton Egerton,
George Cornwall Legh.

(Southern Division.)

Sir Philip de Malpas Grey Egerton, bt.,
John Tollemache.

CHESTER.

Rt. hon. (Robert Grosvenor) Lord R. Grosvenor,
Sir John Jervis, knt.

CHICHESTER.

Hon. (George Charles Henry Gordon Lennox) Lord G. C. H. G. Lennox.
John Abel Smith.

CHIPPENHAM.

Joseph Neeld,
Henry George Boldero.

CHRISTCHURCH.

Hon. Edward Alfred John Harris.

CIRENCESTER.

Hon. George Augustus Frederick (Villiers) Viscount Villiers,
William Cripps.

CLITHEROE.

Edward Cardwell.

COCKERMOUTH.

Henry Aglionby Aglionby,
Edward Horsman.

COLCHESTER.

Richard Sanderson,
Sir George Henry Smith, bt.

CORNWALL.

(Eastern Division.)

William Henry Pole Carew,
William Rashleigh.

(Western Division.)

Edward William Wynne Pendarves,
Sir Charles Lemon, bt.

COVENTRY.

Rt. hon. Edward Ellice,
William Williams.

CRICKLADE.

John Neeld,
Hon. Henry Thomas Howard.

CUMBERLAND.

(Eastern Division.)

Hon. Charles Wentworth George Howard,
William James.

(Western Division.)

Samuel Irton,
Edward Stanley.

DARTMOUTH.

George Moffatt.

DENBIGHSHIRE.

Hon. William Bagott,
Sir Watkin Williams Wynn.

DENBIGH.

Townshend Mainwaring.

DERBYSHIRE.

(Northern Division.)

Hon. Geo. Henry Cavendish,
William Evans.

(Southern Division.)

Edward Miller Mundy,
Charles Robert Colville.

DERBY.

Rt. hon. Edward Strutt,
Hon. John George Brabazon (Ponsonby) Viscount Duncannon.

DEVIZES.

William Heald Ludlow Bruges,
George Heneage Walker Heneage.

DEVONPORT.

Henry Tufnell,
Rt. hon. Sir George Grey, bt.

DEVONSHIRE.

(Northern Division.)

Sir Thomas Dyke Acland, bt.,
Lewis William Buck.

(Southern Division.)

Sir John Buller Yarde Buller, bt.,
Hon. William Reginald (Courtenay) Visct. Courtenay.

DORCHESTER.

Hon. Anthony Henry Ashley-Cooper,
Rt. hon. Sir James Robert George Graham, bt.

DORSETSHIRE.

John Floyer,
Henry Ker Seymer,
George Bankes.

DOVOR.

Sir John Rae Reid, bt.,
Edward Royd Rice.

DROITWICH.

Sir John Somerset Pakington, bt.

DUDLEY.

John Benbow.

DURHAM.

(Northern Division.)

Hedworth Lambton,
Hon. Henry Thomas Liddell.

(Southern Division.)

Hon. (Harry Vane) Lord H. Vane,
John Bowes.

DURHAM (CITY).

Thomas Colpitts Granger,
John Bright.

ESSEX.

(Northern Division.)

Sir John Tyssen Tyrell, bt.,
Charles Gray Round.

(Southern Division.)

Thomas William Bramston,
George Palmer.

EVESHAM.

Hon. (Arthur Marcus Cecil Hill) Lord A. M. C. Hill,
Peter Borthwick.

EXETER.

Sir John Thomas Buller Duckworth, bt.,
Edward Divett.

EYE.

Sir Edward Kerrison, bt.

FINSBURY.

Thos. Slingsby Duncombe,
Thomas Wakley.

FLINTSHIRE.
Sir Stephen Richard Glynne, bt.

FLINT.
Sir Richard Bulkeley Williams Bulkeley, bt.

FROME.
Thomas Sheppard.

GATESHEAD.
William Hutt.

GLAMORGANSHIRE.
Hon. Edward Richard Wyndham (Wyndham Quin) Viscount Adare,
Christopher Rice Mansel Talbot.

GLOUCESTERSHIRE.
(Eastern Division.)

Sir Christopher William Codrington, bt.,
Hon. Henry (Somerset) Marquess of Worcester.

(Western Division.)

Hon. George Charles Grantley Fitzhardinge Berkeley,
Robert Blagden Hale.

GLOUCESTER.
John Phillpots,
Hon. Maurice Frederick Fitzhardinge Berkeley.

GRANTHAM.
Glynne Earle Welby,
Hon. Frederick James Tollemache.

GREENWICH.
James Whitley Deans Dundas,
Edward George Barnard.

GRIMSBY (GREAT).
Edward Heneage.

GUILDFORD.
Ross Donnelly Mangles,
Charles Baring Wall.

HALIFAX.
Edward Davis Protheroe,
Rt. hon. Sir Charles Wood, bt.

HAMPSHIRE.
(Northern Division).

Rt. hon. Charles Shaw Lefevre,
Sir William Heathcote, bt.

Southern Division).

Hon. (Charles Wellesley) Lord C. Wellesley,
Henry Combe Compton.

HARWICH.
John Attwood,
William Beresford.

HASTINGS.
Musgrave Briscoe,
Robert Hollond.

HAVERFORDWEST.
Sir Richard Bulkeley Philipps Philipps, bt.

HELSTON.
Sir Richard Rawlinson Vyvyan, bt.

HEREFORDSHIRE.
Kedgwin Hoskins,
Thomas Baskerville Mynors Baskerville,
Joseph Bailey.

HEREFORD.
Sir Robert Price, bt.,
Robert Pulsford.

HERTFORDSHIRE.
Thomas Plumer Halsey,
Abel Smith,
Hon. Granville Dudley Ryder.

HERTFORD.
Hon. Philip Henry (Stanhope) Viscount Mahon,
Hon. William Francis Cowper.

HONITON.
Hugh Duncan Baillie,
Forster Alleyne MacGeachy.

HORSHAM.
Robert Henry Hurst.

HUDDERSFIELD.
William Rookes Crompton Stansfield.

HUNTINGDONSHIRE.
Edward Fellowes,
George Thornhill.

HUNTINGDON.
Thomas Baring,
Jonathan Peel.

HYTHE.
Stewart Marjoribanks.

IPSWICH.
John Neilstone Gladstone,
Sackville Lane Fox.

KENDAL.
Henry Warburton.

KENT.
(Eastern Division.)

William Deedes,
John Pemberton Plumptre.

(Western Division.)

Sir Edmund Filmer, bt.,
Thomas Austen.

KIDDERMINSTER.
Richard Godson.

KING'S LYNN.
Hon. (William George Frederick Cavendish Bentinck) Lord W. G. F. C. Bentinck,
Hon. Robert (Jocelyn) Viscount Jocelyn.

KINGSTON-UPON-HULL.
Sir John Hanmer, bt.,
Sir Walter Charles James, bt.

KNARESBOROUGH.
Andrew Lawson,
William Busfeild Ferrand.

LAMBETH.
Benjamin Hawes,
Rt. hon. Charles Tennyson D'Eyncourt.

LANCASHIRE.
(Northern Division.)

John Wilson Patten,
John Talbot Clifton.

(Southern Division.)

William Brown,
William Entwisle.

LANCASTER.
Thomas Greene,
George Marton.

LAUNCESTON.
William Bowles.

LEEDS.
William Beckett,
William Aldam.

LEICESTERSHIRE.
(Northern Division.)

Hon. (Charles Henry Somerset Manners) Lord C. H. S. Manners,
Edward Basil Farnham.

(Southern Division.)

Sir Henry Halford, bt.,
Charles William Packe.

LEICESTER.
Sir John Easthope, bt.,
Wynn Ellis.

LEOMINSTER.
Henry Barkly,
George Arkwright.

LEWES.
Hon. Henry Fitzroy,
Sir Howard Elphinstone, bt.

LICHFIELD.

Hon. (Alfred Henry Paget) Lord A. H. Paget,
Hon. Edward Mostyn Lloyd Mostyn.

LINCOLNSHIRE.

(Parts of Kesteven and Holland.)

Christopher Turnor,
Sir John Trollope, bt.

(Parts of Lindsey.)

Sir Montague John Cholmeley, bt.,
Robert Adam Christopher.

LINCOLN.

Charles De Laet Waldo Sibthorp,
William Rickford Collett.

LISKEARD.

Charles Buller.

LIVERPOOL.

Hon. Dudley (Ryder) Viscount Sandon,
Sir Howard Douglas, bt.

LONDON.

John Masterman,
James Pattison,
George Lyall,
Rt. hon. (John Russell) Lord J. Russell.

LUDLOW.

Beriah Botfield,
James Ackers.

LYME REGIS.

Thomas Hussey.

LYMINGTON.

John Stewart,
William Alexander Mackinnon.

MACCLESFIELD.

John Brocklehurst,
Thomas Grimsditch.

MAIDSTONE.

Alexander James Beresford Hope,
George Dodd.

MALDON.

Quintin Dick,
John Round.

MALMESBURY.

Hon. James Kenneth Howard.

MALTON.

Hon. William Thomas Spencer (Wentworth Fitzwilliam) Viscount Milton,
John Evelyn Denison.

MANCHESTER.

Mark Philips,
Rt. hon. Thomas Milner Gibson.

MARLBOROUGH.

Hon. (Ernest Augustus Charles Brudenell Bruce) Lord E. A. C. B. Bruce,
Henry Bingham Baring.

MARLOW (GREAT).

Thomas Peers Williams,
Renn Hampden.

MARYLEBONE.

Sir Benjamin Hall, bt.,
Sir Charles Napier, K.C.B.

MERIONETHSHIRE.

Richard Richards.

MERTHYR TYDVIL.

Sir Josiah John Guest, bt.

MIDDLESEX.

George Byng,
Thomas Wood.

MIDHURST.

Spencer Horatio Walpole.

MONMOUTHSHIRE.

Rt. hon. (Granville Charles Henry Somerset) Lord G. C. H. Somerset,
Charles Octavius Swinnerton Morgan.

MONMOUTH.

Reginald James Blewitt.

MONTGOMERYSHIRE.

Rt. hon. Charles Watkin Williams Wynn.

MONTGOMERY.

Hon. Hugh Cholmondeley.

MORPETH.

Hon. Edward George Granville Howard.

NEWARK-UPON-TRENT.

John Stuart.
Hon. (John Manners) Lord J. Manners.

NEWCASTLE-UNDER-LYME.

Edmund Buckley,
John Campbell Colquhoun.

NEWCASTLE-UPON-TYNE.

William Ord,
John Hodgson Hinde.

NEWPORT.

Charles Wykeham Martin,
William John Hamilton.

NORFOLK.

(Eastern Division.)

Edmund Wodehouse,
Henry Negus Burroughes.

(Western Division.)

William Bagge,
William Lyde Wiggett Chute.

NORTHALLERTON.

William Battye Wrightson.

NORTHAMPTONSHIRE.

(Northern Division.)

Thomas Philip Maunsell,
Augustus Stafford O'Brien.

(Southern Division.)

Richard Henry Richard Howard Vyse.
Sir Charles Knightley, bt.

NORTHAMPTON.

Rt. Hon. Robert Vernon Smith,
Raikes Currie.

NORTHUMBERLAND.

(Northern Division.)

Hon. Charles (Bennett) Lord Ossulston,
Addison John Baker Cresswell.

(Southern Division.)

Matthew Bell,
Savile Craven Henry Ogle.

NORWICH.

Hon. Arthur Richard (Wellesley) Marquess of Douro,
Benjamin Smith.

NOTTINGHAMSHIRE.

(Northern Division.)

Thomas Houldsworth,
Hon. (Henry William Cavendish Bentinck) Lord H. W. C. Bentinck.

(Southern Division.)

Thomas Blackburne Thornton Hildyard,
Lancelot Rolleston.

NOTTINGHAM.

Rt. Hon. Sir John Cam Hobhouse, bt.,
Thomas Gisborne.

OLDHAM.

John Fielden,
William Augustus Johnson.

OXFORDSHIRE.

Hon. Montague (Bertie) Lord Norreys,
George Granville Harcourt,
Joseph Warner Henley.

OXFORD (CITY).

James Haughton Langston,
Donald Maclean.

OXFORD (UNIVERSITY).

Thomas Grimston Bucknall Estcourt,
Sir Robert Harry Inglis, bt.

PEMBROKESHIRE.
Hon. John Frederick Vaughan (Campbell) Viscount Emlyn.

PEMBROKE.
Sir John Owen, bt.

PENRYN AND FALMOUTH.
Hon. John Cranch Walker Vivian,
James Hanway Plumridge.

PETERBOROUGH.
Hon. George Wentworth Fitzwilliam,
Sir Robert Heron, bt.

PETERSFIELD.
Sir William George Hylton Jolliffe, bt.

PLYMOUTH.
Thomas Gill,
Hon. Hugh (Fortescue) Viscount Ebrington.

PONTEFRACT.
Hon. John Charles George (Savile) Visc. Pollington,
Richard Monckton Milnes.

POOLE.
Hon. Charles Frederic Ashley Cooper Ponsonby,
George Richard Philips.

PORTSMOUTH.
Rt. Hon. Francis Thornhill Baring,
Sir George Thomas Staunton, bt.

PRESTON.
Sir Peter Hesketh Fleetwood, bt.,
Sir George Strickland, bt.

RADNORSHIRE.
Sir John Benn Walsh, bt.

RADNOR (NEW).
Richard Price.

READING.
Charles Russell,
Hon. Henry Charles (Cadogan) Viscount Chelsea.

REIGATE.
Hon. C. Sommers (Sommers-Cocks) Viscount Eastnor.

RETFORD (EAST).
Hon. Arthur Duncombe,
Granville Harcourt Vernon.

RICHMOND.
Hon. John Charles Dundas,
Henry Rich.

RIPON.
Hon. Edwin Lascelles.
Rt. hon. Sir George Cockburn, G.C.B.

ROCHDALE.
William Sharman Crawford.

ROCHESTER.
James Douglas Stoddart Douglas,
William Henry Bodkin.

RUTLANDSHIRE.
Gilbert John Heathcote,
George Finch.

RYE.
Herbert Barrett Curteis.

ST. ALBAN'S.
George William John Repton,
Benjamin Bond Cabbell.

ST. IVES.
Hon. (William John Frederic) Lord W. J. F. Powlett.

SALFORD.
Joseph Brotherton.

SALISBURY.
John Henry Campbell Wyndham.

SALOP, OR SHROPSHIRE.
(Northern Division.)
Hon. Edward (Clive) Viscount Clive,
William Ormsby Gore.
Southern Division.
Hon. Robert Henry Clive,
Hon. Orlando George Chas. (Bridgeman) Viscount Newport.

SANDWICH.
Sir Edward Thomas Troubridge, bt.,
Hugh Hamilton Lindsay.

SCARBOROUGH.
Sir John Vanden Bempde Johnstone, bt.,
Sir Frederick William Trench, knt.

SHAFTESBURY.
Richard Brinsley Sheridan.

SHEFFIELD.
John Parker,
Henry George Ward.

SHIELDS (SOUTH).
John Twizell Wawn.

SHOREHAM (NEW).
Sir Charles Merrik Burrell, bt.,
Charles Goring.

SHREWSBURY.
George Tomline,
Benjamin Disraeli.

SOMERSETSHIRE.
(Eastern Division.)
William Gore Langton,
William Miles.
(Western Division.)
Thomas Dyke Acland,
Francis Henry Dickinson.

SOUTHAMPTON.
Humphrey St. John Mildmay,
George William Hope.

SOUTHWARK.
John Humphery,
Sir William Molesworth, bt.

STAFFORDSHIRE.
(Northern Division.)
Jesse David Watts Russell,
Charles Bowyer Adderley.
(Southern Division.)
Hn. Henry John (Chetwynd Talbot) Viscount Ingestrie,
Hon. George Anson.

STAFFORD.
Hon. Swinfen Thomas Carnegie,
Edward Buller.

STAMFORD.
Hon. Charles Cecil John (Manners) Marquess of Granby,
Rt. hon. Sir George Clerk, bt.

STOCKPORT.
Henry Marsland,
Richard Cobden.

STOKE-UPON-TRENT.
John Lewis Ricardo,
William Taylor Copeland.

STROUD.
William Henry Stanton,
George Poulett Scrope.

SUDBURY.
(Disfranchised 7 & 8 VICT. c. 53.)

SUFFOLK.
(Eastern Division.)
Edward Sherlock Gooch,
Rt. hon. Frederick Thellusson Lord Rendlesham.
(Western Division.)
Philip Bennet,
Harry Spencer Waddington.

SUNDERLAND.
David Barclay,
George Hudson.

SURREY.

(Eastern Division.)

Henry Kemble,
Edmund Antrobus.

(Western Division.)

William Joseph Denison,
John Trotter.

SUSSEX.

(Eastern Division.)

Charles Hay Frewen,
Augustus Elliott Fuller.

(Western Division.)

Hon. Charles Henry (Gordon Lennox) Earl of March.

SWANSEA.

John Henry Vivian.

TAMWORTH.

Rt. hon. Sir Robert Peel, bt.,
Edward Henry A'Court.

TAUNTON.

Rt. hon. Henry Labouchere,
Sir Thomas Edward Colebrooke, bt.

TAVISTOCK.

John Salusbury Trelawny,
Hon. (Edward Russell) Lord E. Russell.

TEWKESBURY.

William Dowdeswell,
John Martin.

THETFORD.

Rt. hon. William Bingham Baring,
Sir James Flower, bt.

THIRSK.

John Bell.

TIVERTON.

John Heathcoat,
Rt. hon. Henry John Viscount Palmerston.

TOTNESS.

Hon. Edward Adolphus (Seymour) Lord Seymour,
Charles Barry Baldwin.

TOWER HAMLETS.

Sir William Clay, bt.,
Charles Richard Fox.

TRURO.

John Ennis Vivian,
Edmund Turner.

TYNEMOUTH.

Henry Mitcalfe.

WAKEFIELD.

Hon. William Sebright Lascelles.

WALLINGFORD.

William Seymour Blackstone.

WALSALL.

Robert Scott.

WAREHAM.

John Samuel Wanley Sawbridge Erle Drax.

WARRINGTON.

John Ireland Blackburn.

WARWICKSHIRE.

(Northern Division.)

William Stratford Dugdale,
Charles Newdegate Newdegate.

(Southern Division.)

Hon. George Guy (Greville) Lord Brooke,
Evelyn John Shirley.

WARWICK.

Sir Charles Eurwicke Douglas, knt.,
William Collins.

WELLS.

William Goodenough Hayter,
Richard Blakemore.

WENLOCK.

Hon. George Cecil Weld Forester,
James Milnes Gaskell.

WESTBURY.

Sir Ralph Lopes, bt.

WESTMINSTER.

John Temple Leader,
Sir De Lacy Evans, K.C.B.

WESTMORELAND.

William Thompson,
Hon. Henry Cecil Lowther.

WEYMOUTH AND MELCOMBE REGIS.

Ralph Bernal,
William Dougal Christie.

WHITBY.

Aaron Chapman.

WHITEHAVEN.

Matthias Attwood.

WIGAN.

Hon. James Lindsey,
Charles Standish.

WIGHT (ISLE OF).

Hon. William Henry Ashe A'Court Holmes.

WILTON.

Hon. James Charles Herbert Welbore Ellis (Agar) Viscount Somerton.

WILTSHIRE.

(Northern Division.)

Thomas Henry Sutton Sotheron,
Walter Long.

(Southern Division.)

John Benett,
Rt. hon. Sidney Herbert.

WINCHESTER.

Sir James Buller East, bt.
Bickham Escott.

WINDSOR.

George Alexander Reid,
Ralph Neville.

WOLVERHAMPTON.

Hon. Charles Pelham Villiers,
Thomas Thornely.

WOODSTOCK.

Hon. (Alfred Spencer-Churchill) Lord A. Churchill.

WORCESTERSHIRE.

(Eastern Division.)

George Rushout.
James Arthur Taylor.

(Western Division.)

Hon. Henry Beauchamp Lygon,
Frederick Winn Knight.

WORCESTER.

Sir Denis Le Marchant, bt.
Joseph Bailey.

WYCOMBE (CHIPPING).

George Henry Dashwood,
Ralph Osborne.

YARMOUTH (GREAT).

Charles Edward Rumbold,
William Wilshere.

YORKSHIRE.

(East Riding.)

Henry Broadley,
Right hon. Beaumont Lord Hotham.

(West Riding.)

Rt. hon. George William Frederick (Howard) Viscount Morpeth,
Edmund Beckett Denison.

(North Riding.)

Hon. Octavius Duncombe,
Edward Stillingfleet Cayley.

YORK.

Sir John Henry Lowther, bt.
Henry Galgacus Redhead Yorke.

SCOTLAND.

ABERDEENSHIRE.

Hon. William Gordon.

ABERDEEN.

Alexander Bannerman.

ARGYLLSHIRE.
Duncan MacNeil.

AYRSHIRE.
Alexander Oswald.

AYR, &c.
Hon. (Patrick James Herbert Crichton Stuart) Lord P. J. H. C. Stuart.

BANFFSHIRE.
James Duff.

BERWICKSHIRE.
Sir Hugh Purvis Hume Campbell, bt.

BUTESHIRE.
Rt. hon. James Archibald Stuart Wortley.

CAITHNESS-SHIRE.
George Trail.

CLACKMANNAN AND KINROSS SHIRES.
William Morrison.

DUMBARTONSHIRE.
Alexander Smollett.

DUMFRIES-SHIRE.
John James Hope Johnstone.

DUMFRIES, &c.
William Ewart.

DUNDEE.
George Duncan.

DYSART, &c.
Robert Ferguson.

EDINBURGHSHIRE.
Sir John Hope, bt.

EDINBURGH.
Rt. hon. Thomas Babington Macaulay,
William Gibson Craig.

ELGINSHIRE AND NAIRNE.
Charles Lennox Cumming Bruce.

ELGIN, &c.
Sir Andrew Leith Hay, knt.

FIFESHIRE.
James Erskine Wemyss.

FORFARSHIRE.
Hon. (John Frederick Gordon) Lord J. F. Gordon.

GLASGOW.
James Oswald,
John Dennistoun.

GREENOCK.
Walter Baine.

HADDINGTONSHIRE.
Sir Thomas Buchan Hepburn, bt.

HADDINGTON, &c.
James Maitland Balfour.

INVERKEITHING, &c.
Hon. Archibald (Primrose) Lord Dalmeny.

INVERNESS-SHIRE.
Henry James Baillie.

INVERNESS, &c.
James Morrison.

KILMARNOCK, &c.
Hon. Edward Pleydell Bouverie.

KINCARDINESHIRE.
Hon. Hugh Arbuthnott.

KIRKCUDBRIGHT.
Thomas Maitland.

KIRKWALL, WICK, &c.
James Loch.

LANARKSHIRE.
William Lockhart.

LEITH, &c.
Rt. hon. Andrew Rutherfurd.

LINLITHGOWSHIRE.
William Baillie.

LINLITHGOW, &c.
Hon. Henry Pelham (Fiennes Pelham Clinton) Earl of Lincoln.

MONTROSE, INVERBERVIE, &c.
Joseph Hume.

ORKNEY AND SHETLAND SHIRES.
Frederick Dundas.

PAISLEY.
Archibald Hastie.

PEEBLES-SHIRE.
William Forbes Mackenzie.

PERTHSHIRE.
Henry Home Drummond.

PERTH.
Rt. hon. Fox Maule.

RENFREWSHIRE.
William Mure.

ROSS AND CROMARTY-SHIRES.
Thomas Mackenzie.

ROXBURGHSHIRE.
Hon. Francis Scott.

ST. ANDREWS, CUPAR, &c.
Edward Ellice.

SELKIRKSHIRE.
Allen Eliott Lockhart.

STIRLINGSHIRE.
William Forbes.

SUTHERLANDSHIRE
David Dundas.

WIGTONSHIRE.
John Dalrymple.

WIGTON, &c.
Sir John MacTaggart, bt.

IRELAND.

ANTRIM.
Sir Horace Beauchamp Seymour, knt.,
Nathaniel Alexander.

ARMAGH.
Hon. Archibald (Acheson) Viscount Acheson,
Sir William Verner, bt.

ARMAGH (CITY).
John Dawson Rawdon.

ATHLONE.
John Collett.

BANDON BRIDGE.
Hon. Francis (Bernard) Viscount Bernard.

BELFAST.
Hon. (John Ludford Chichester) Lord J. L. Chichester,
David Robert Ross.

CARLOW.
Henry Bruen,
William Bunbury MacClintock.

CARLOW (BOROUGH).
Brownlow Villiers Layard.

CARRICKFERGUS.
Peter Kirk.

CASHELL.
Timothy O'Brien.

CAVAN.
John Young,
Hon. James Pierce Maxwell.

CLARE.
William Nugent MacNamara,
Cornelius O'Brien.

CLONMEL.
Hon. Cecil John Lawless.

COLERAINE.
John Boyd.

CORK.
Daniel O'Connell,
Edmund Burke Roche.

CORK (CITY).
Alexander MacCarthy.
Daniel Callaghan.

DONEGAL.
Sir Edmund Samuel Hayes, bt.,
Edward Michael Conolly.

DOWN.
Rt. hon. Frederick William Robert (Stewart) Viscount Castlereagh,
Hon. Edwin (Hill) Lord E. Hill.

DOWNPATRICK.
David Stewart Kerr.

DROGHEDA.
Sir William Meredyth Somerville, bt.

DUBLIN.
James Hans Hamilton,
Thomas Edward Taylor.

DUBLIN (CITY).
Edward Grogan,
William Henry Gregory.

DUBLIN (UNIVERSITY).
Rt. hon. Frederick Shaw,
George Alex. Hamilton.

DUNDALK.
Daniel O'Connell, jun.

DUNGANNON.
Hon. Thomas (Knox) Viscount Northland.

DUNGARVON.
Rt. hon. Richard Lalor Sheil.

ENNIS.
Hewitt Bridgeman

ENNISKILLEN.
Hon. Henry Arthur Cole.

FERMANAGH.
Sir Arthur Brinsley Brooke, bt.,
Mervyn Archdall.

GALWAY.
John James Bodkin,
Thomas Barnewell Martin.

GALWAY (BOROUGH).
Martin Joseph Blake, bt.,
Sir Valentine Blake, bt.

KERRY.
Hon. William Browne,
Morgan John O'Connell,

KILDARE.
Richard More O'Ferrall,
Robert Archbold.

KILKENNY.
Hn. Pierse Somerset Butler,
Richard Smithwick.

KILKENNY (BOROUGH).
John O'Connell.

KING'S (COUNTY).
Hon. John Craven Westenra,
Sir Andrew Armstrong, bt.

KINSALE.
William Henry Watson.

LEITRIM.
Hon. William Sydney (Clements) Viscount Clements,
Samuel White.

LIMERICK.
William Smith O'Brien,
Caleb Powell.

LIMERICK (CITY).
James Kelly,
John O'Brien.

LISBURN.
Henry Meynell.

LONDONDERRY.
Thomas Bateson,
Theobald Jones.

LONDONDERRY (CITY).
Sir Robert Alexander Ferguson, bt.

LONGFORD.
Anthony Lefroy,
Henry White.

LOUTH.
Rich. Montesquieu Bellew,
Hon. Thomas Vesey Dawson.

MALLOW.
Sir Charles Denham Orlando Jephson Norreys, bt.

MAYO.
Robert Dillon Browne,
Joseph Myles MacDonnell.

MEATH.
Matthew Elias Corbally,
Henry Grattan.

MONAGHAN.
Evelyn Philip Shirley,
Charles Powell Leslie.

NEWRY.
Hon. Francis Jack (Needham) Viscount Newry and Morne.

PORTARLINGTON.
Rt. hon. George Lionel Dawson Damer.

QUEEN'S COUNTY.
Sir Chas. Henry Coote, bt.,
Hon. Thomas Vesey.

ROSS (NEW).
Hon. Robert Gore.

ROSSCOMMON.
Fitzstephen French,
Denis O'Conor (The O'Conor Don).

SLIGO.
John Ffolliott,
William Richard Ormsby Gore.

SLIGO (BOROUGH).
John Patrick Somers.

TIPPERARY.
Richard Albert Fitzgerald,
Nicholas Maher.

TRALEE.
Maurice O'Connell.

TYRONE.
Right hon. Henry Thomas Lowry Corry,
Hon. (Claud Hamilton) Lord C. Hamilton.

WATERFORD.
William Villiers Stuart,
Hon. Robt. Shapland Carew.

WATERFORD (CITY).
Sir Henry Winston Barron, bt.,
Thomas Wyse.

WESTMEATH.
Hugh Morgan Tuite,
Benjamin James Chapman.

WEXFORD.
Villiers Francis Hatton,
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WICKLOW.
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YOUGHALL.
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HANSARD'S

PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES,

IN THE *SEVENTH SESSION* OF THE *FOURTEENTH PARLIAMENT* OF THE UNITED KINGDOM OF *GREAT BRITAIN*
AND *IRELAND*, APPOINTED TO MEET 11 NOVEMBER, 1841,
AND FROM THENCE CONTINUED TILL 19 JANUARY, 1847, IN THE
TENTH YEAR OF THE REIGN OF

HER MAJESTY QUEEN VICTORIA.

FIRST VOLUME OF THE SESSION.

HOUSE OF LORDS,

Tuesday, January 19, 1847.

MINUTES.] *Took the Oaths.*—Lord Bishop of Saint Asaph: Lord Audley.
PUBLIC BILLS. 1ª Select Vestries.

MEETING OF PARLIAMENT.

THE PARLIAMENT, which had been prorogued successively from the 28th of August to the 4th of November, the 12th of January, and the 19th of January, met this day for the Despatch of Business. The Session was opened by the QUEEN in Person. Being seated on the Throne, and the Commons being at the Bar, with their Speaker, HER MAJESTY was pleased to make the following most Gracious Speech:—

"*My Lords, and Gentlemen,*

"IT is with the deepest Concern that upon your again assembling I have to call your Attention to the Dearth of Provisions which prevails in *Ireland* and in Parts of *Scotland*.

"IN *Ireland* especially the Loss of the usual Food of the People has been the Cause of severe Sufferings, of Disease, and of greatly increased Mortality among the poorer Classes. Outrages have become more frequent, chiefly directed against Property; and the Transit of Provisions has been rendered unsafe in some Parts of the Country.

"WITH a view to mitigate these Evils, very large Numbers of Men have been employed, and received Wages, in pursuance of an Act passed in the last Session of Parliament. Some Deviations from that Act, which have been authorized by the Lord Lieutenant in order to promote more useful Employment, will, I trust, receive your Sanction. Means have been taken to lessen the Pressure of

Want in Districts which are most remote from the ordinary Sources of Supply. Outrages have been repressed, as far as it was possible, by the Military and Police.

"It is satisfactory to Me to observe, that in many of the most distressed Districts the Patience and Resignation of the People have been most exemplary

"The Deficiency of the Harvest in *France* and *Germany*, and other Parts of *Europe*, has added to the Difficulty of obtaining adequate Supplies of Provisions.

"It will be your Duty to consider what further Measures are required to alleviate the existing Distress. I recommend to you to take into your serious Consideration whether, by increasing for a limited Period the Facilities for importing Corn from Foreign Countries, and by the Admission of Sugar more freely into Breweries and Distilleries, the Supply of Food may be beneficially augmented.

"I have likewise to direct your earnest Consideration to the permanent Condition of *Ireland*. You will perceive, in the Absence of Political Excitement, an Opportunity for taking a dispassionate Survey of the social Evils which afflict that Part of the United Kingdom. Various Measures will be laid before you, which, if adopted by Parliament, may tend to raise the great Mass of People in Comfort, to promote Agriculture, and to lessen the Pressure of that Competition for Land which has been the fruitful Source of Crime and Misery.

"The Marriage of the Infanta *Luisa Fernanda* of *Spain* to the Duke of *Montpensier* has given rise to a Correspondence between My Government and those of *France* and *Spain*.

"The Extinction of the Free State of *Cracow* has appeared to Me to be so manifest a Violation of the Treaty of *Vienna* that I have commanded that a Protest against that Act should be delivered to the Courts of *Vienna*, *Petersburg*, and *Berlin*, which were Parties to it. Copies of these several Papers will be laid before you.

"I entertain confident Hopes that the Hostilities in the River *Plate* which have so long interrupted Commerce may soon be terminated, and My Efforts, in conjunction with those of the King of the *French*, will be earnestly directed to that End.

"My Relations generally with Foreign Powers inspire Me with the fullest Confidence in the Maintenance of Peace.

"*Gentlemen of the House of Commons,*

"I have directed the Estimates to be prepared with a view to provide for the Efficiency of the Public Service with a due Regard for Economy.

"*My Lords, and Gentlemen,*

"I have ordered every requisite Preparation to be made for putting into Operation the Act of the last Session of Parliament for the Establishment of Local Courts for the Recovery of Small Debts. It is My Hope that the Enforcement of Civil Rights in all Parts of the Country to which the Act relates may, by this Measure, be materially facilitated.

"I recommend to your Attention Measures which will be laid before you for improving the Health of Towns, an Object the Importance of which you will not fail to appreciate.

"Deeply sensible of the Blessings which, after a Season of Calamity, have been so often vouchsafed to this

Nation by a superintending Providence, I confide these important Matters to your Care, in a full Conviction that your Discussions will be guided by an impartial Spirit, and in the Hope that the present Sufferings of My People may be lightened, and that their future Condition may be improved, by your deliberative Wisdom."

HER MAJESTY then retired, and the House adjourned during Pleasure: having resumed,

ADDRESS IN ANSWER TO THE SPEECH.

LORD HATHERTON then rose and said, it became his duty to invite their Lordships' consideration to the Address which he should have the honour of proposing in reply to Her Majesty's most Gracious Speech. The condition of Ireland had necessarily given a prominence to that topic which its all-absorbing importance deserved; and for the first time for a long series of years, Ireland appeared no longer as the arena of political agitation. The question, therefore, which they had now to consider, was no longer a question of party interest or of party opposition, or of party policy; for it had pleased the Almighty, in his inscrutable wisdom, to inflict upon that country a wide-spread and desolating famine, unequalled, he believed, in the past history of the world—certainly not to be paralleled in the history of modern times. The population of Ireland since the year 1792—that was, during the last fifty-four years—had exactly doubled. Even at that period the potato formed the most common article of food throughout that country; and it was well known that from that period down to the present time, the potato had become more and more the principal article of subsistence of a large portion of the Irish people. Not only was it the principal article of subsistence of the cottar and the peasant, but of the small farmer also; and not only of the small farmer, but of a very large proportion of the population inhabiting the suburbs of large towns; not only was it the principal article of sustenance for all these classes, but it entered very materially into the consumption of the animals which the people reared, and on which they were accustomed to depend for food and provision. The value of the potato crop had been estimated at not less than sixteen millions annually, and he believed, that that was by no means an overestimate of its value. When their Lordships considered the immense amount of sustenance which such a crop would afford, some idea might be formed of the awful misery consequent upon its failure. The failure of that root had brought on a famine which had not only proved destructive to the poorer classes, but which threatened the existence of every man in the community. The result of it was that the union workhouses were filled to overflowing, and the governors had been compelled to close their doors against further admissions; whilst he believed that many of those houses were bordering on the verge of bankruptcy. In consequence of the Labour-rate Act passed at the close of last Session, presentment sessions had been held in a great number of the baronies of Ireland. Out of the 326 baronies, 293 had put the Labour-rate Act into operation. In all those baronies presentment sessions had been held once; in upwards of eighty, he believed, they had been held twice, for the purpose of voting public works; and in no inconsiderable number of instances they had been held three times. There might be certain objections to that Act, such as the possibility of undertaking works of a useless kind, and the danger that it might lead to a general neglect of the cultivation of the soil; but he believed that it was regarded as a measure which was passed in anticipation of considerable difficulties, and that it received, at the time, very general support; and he was certainly not aware that at that time any person in authority denounced the measure as inadequate for the purposes which it was intended to accomplish. In this state of things it became absolutely necessary for the Lord Lieutenant, in communication with the Government of this country, to consider what was to be done to avoid these evils, and to continue to employ the people on a principle satisfactory to the landed proprietors, and not ruinous to the country at large. There were but two paths to be taken—one, to assemble Parliament to devise other measures—the other, for the Lord Lieutenant to take upon himself the direction and management of the public money as he best could under the circumstances. In his opinion the Government had acted wisely in not adopting the former alternative. If they had adopted it there would have been a long delay before Parliament could have assembled, and a long discussion when it did, and Government could not possibly have had the experience which it now possessed, whilst pending all these proceedings little or nothing could have been done by the landed proprietors throughout the country. The Lord Lieutenant had, therefore, in his opinion, taken upon himself the exercise of the wisest discretion in determining to accommodate, as far as possible, the existing Act of Parliament to the circumstances of the case, by adopting such of its provisions as permitted the application of the funds to the occupation of the people in useful public and reproductive works. But to accomplish this it had been by no means operative to the requisite extent, for it confined the expenditure of the public money almost exclusively to drainage, and many of the landowners had no land which required draining, so that he believed no great advancement had been made under Mr. Labouchere's scheme. A very usual complaint, also, and not an unnatural one, was, that the Irish landlords could not guard against the injustice of the double tax, for a man who had released his land from all charge was not released from his contributions to the baronial expenses. That state of things naturally educed the cry that the area on which the presentments were rated should be much reduced, and that a townland should constitute an area, instead of an electoral division. Whilst speaking upon this point, he would congratulate the noble Duke upon the propriety of the suggestions which he had made upon this subject some years ago, when the Irish poor law was under consideration, and he could only regret that his suggestions had not been still further carried out. There was also another Act of Parliament, under which the Treasury was empowered to grant 50,000*l.* to be expended in public works, such as moles, harbours, and fisheries; but that Act was clogged with such inconvenient provisions that he believed not one farthing had been advantageously applied under it. Ireland was now in such a condition that drainage, which afforded beneficial employment to so many of the labouring classes, must cease almost immediately. The Labour-rate Act, then, must soon cease in Ireland, because in many districts it would be impossible to find works on which the public money could be advantageously expended. It would be necessary, therefore, for their Lordships, in conjunction with the House of Commons, to find some other modes of employing the people of Ireland. What those modes should be it was not his intention to suggest, nor would he repeat what he had heard upon the subject, for, possessing no authentic or accurate knowledge, he should be sorry to provoke just then a discussion with regard to it. He fully admitted its paramount importance, and the right of the public, deeply interested as they were in the question, to be made acquainted with all that related to it as soon as possible; but it would be the duty of the First Minister of the Crown in a very few days to bring that important question under the consideration of Parliament. Such were the statements which, upon this subject, he had felt it imperative to state to their Lordships. If he had omitted anything which he should have stated, or if he had mis-stated anything, there were so many of their Lordships so intimately acquainted with all the affairs of Ireland, that those omissions would be readily supplied, or the mis-statements corrected; and, besides, their Lordships would presently have the satisfaction of hearing his noble Friend behind him, who had been so long and so beneficially connected with the county of Wexford, and who could so ably supply any deficiency of which he (Lord Hatherton) had been guilty. It was only necessary further to implore their Lordships, in considering this question, to make the case of Ireland their own; and it was desirable that they should carefully examine and consider the different constitution and condition of property in England and Ireland. Nothing could be more dispiriting than the comparison. In England they had a large landed proprietary, who were generally in circumstances of very considerable affluence. They had besides a vast moneyed interest—a moneyed interest not confined to or concentrated only in the metropolis, but an interest extending to every manufacturing town, to every port in the kingdom, and spread generally over its whole surface. They had, besides, a large body of manufacturers and merchants, as well as a thriving and substantial yeomanry on the estates of the landlords. They had also, and this was very important, a long-established system of organization, cemented by the laws under which they lived; and there was scarcely a parish throughout England in which there were not means calculated to render aid to the humbler classes in the time of necessity. But how different was the case in Ireland! There were, no doubt, several large wealthy landed proprietors there.

But, with respect to organization, whilst there was undoubtedly an aptitude for organization for political purposes, yet he feared that for any practical useful purposes the people were remarkably deficient of that quality. Let him imagine one or two analogies, to bring the present position of Ireland more forcibly to their Lordships' minds. Suppose it possible that, by some atmospheric influence, an insect were found to infect every bag of cotton imported into Lancashire for the purpose of the manufactures of this country, and that, consequently, the cotton had been rendered unfit for use. Had their Lordships then addressed the great mill-owners of the country in language such as had been addressed to the landlords of Ireland, and had said, "You have reared up all these people, and we now throw their support upon you," though, no doubt, the answers would have been characterized by benevolence and pity, yet they would find that their Lordships would soon be addressed in some such language as this—"We are now thrown on our own resources, and are made responsible in order to meet this great emergency; but we expect that some partial relief should be extended to us by the Imperial Legislature." To bring the analogy near home, let their Lordships suppose that the blight had fallen on the wheat and oat crops of this country, and that no such thing had happened in Ireland, would it be right in such a case that the English landowner alone should be called upon to defray the expenses of supporting the poor? These remarks emanated solely from himself, and had not been made at the suggestion of any party; but he could not have undertaken the duty of proposing the Address to the Crown, unless he had been allowed free license to express his own opinions. Whatever might be the issue of this fearful calamity, one thing was certain, and that was, that it was the bounden duty of all parties, both in England and Ireland, from the highest Minister of the Crown, down to the lowest member of society, to combine, and by every exertion, and by every personal sacrifice, if necessary, to do all in their power to arrest the fearful progress of this giant evil. Let them reflect what would have been the condition of England if the Channel had not existed between the two countries. The consequence to England would then have been as dire as if the calamity had occurred in England itself. Whatever might be the issue of the calamity, they had the satisfaction of knowing that there was a universal determination to do all to alleviate the present distresses. They could only hope that Heaven had in store a better order of things, and that the present trial was only intended to fit them for the better understanding of social duties. Two practical points had been suggested by Her Majesty in Her Speech from the Throne as suited to the present emergency. He alluded to the suspension, for a limited period, of the existing corn law, and to the admission of sugar for use in breweries and distilleries. He could not entertain the slightest doubt that there would be a disposition, both on the part of their Lordships and the other House of Parliament, to concede both of these measures. It was pretended, he knew, by some, that with the price of grain rising in all the markets of the world, and with prices in this country in advance of other markets, nothing was more certain than, by opening the ports for a given period, the importing merchants, factors, and dealers generally, would put all the advantage in their own pockets. But, although the fact was not alluded to in Her Majesty's Speech, he looked for a suspension of the navigation laws for a limited period. And with regard to the admission of sugar into breweries and distilleries, their Lordships must bear in mind that the price of barley was 10*s.* per quarter higher now than at the corresponding period of last year; and that it was admitted by the most intelligent brewers and distillers that more than one-fifth of the colonial produce could not be safely substituted for barley. The price of beer had been greatly advanced to the retailers, and by them to the public. There was another measure not mentioned in Her Majesty's Speech, but which, in his opinion was necessary to be adopted for the purpose of carrying forward measures of a most important nature to Ireland, as large advances were to be made to landlords upon security of the soil. He alluded to a reported intention on the part of Her Majesty's Government to appoint a commission for the purpose of facilitating grants; and if what he had further heard should be true, that a noble and learned Lord presiding over one of Her Majesty's Courts, a person of eminent learning and character, had consented to give his aid in the working of that commission, he anticipated the greatest benefits to the country from it. Indeed, he did not see how it could be justly proposed to charge a considerable sum upon the landlords for the improvement of waste lands, and of other portions of property, without at the same time giving them some facilities for discharging their debts by disposing of a portion of their property. The old-fashioned notions of the sanctity of entail ought not to stand in the way of a modified change of this description; and he should be very much disappointed if the commission did not carry its reforms somewhat further. There was a natural tendency in the long-established practice of conveyancing to multiply entanglements and complications, and for the business to be put in a course which, however profitable it might be to the artist employed, was an immense disadvantage to those for whom it was designed. There was also another object of importance—the necessity which in his opinion existed for the establishment of some great ordinary tribunal for the regulation of exchanges of property. At present individuals wishing to exchange had no course open to them but an Act of Parliament. The Church was much interested in this subject; and there were few persons acquainted with landed property, especially entailed property, who had not seen cases of serious deterioration of the public benefit from the want of such a tribunal. Her Majesty next informed them that She had ordered the correspondence between Her Government and those of France and Spain, in relation to the marriage of the Duke of Montpensier, to be laid before Parliament. As he had no authentic information upon anything that had passed upon this subject, he should refrain from making a single observation upon it. With regard to the occupation of Cracow, Her Majesty informed them She had ordered the Papers respecting it to be laid before Parliament; and also that She had commanded that a Protest against that act should be delivered to the Courts of Vienna, Petersburg, and Berlin. Although he did not propose to do more than ask their Lordships to concur in the Address he should propose, the extinction of the free State of Cracow appeared to be so manifest a violation of the Treaty of Vienna, that he must, in his individual capacity, state his opinion upon it in the strongest terms he could command. Austria, of all other countries, should have most adhered to the principle of that treaty, which formed the basis of the settlement of Europe. Not only was a large and important portion of the fabric of her own empire based upon the provisions of that treaty; but much that had been done in other parts of Europe, calculated for her protection, derived stability from it; and if, upon account of the distance of that ill-fated republic, it was impossible for the other States of Europe to interfere for her protection, it then became necessary, for the honour and the general interest of all, that the strongest protest should be made by all that were interested against this unfortunate Act; and he could not entertain the shadow of a doubt that both their Lordships and the other House of Parliament would respond to the general sentiment of the people of this country—abhorrence of an unrighteous act, which they conceived to be not only a crime, but an evil of the gravest description. Her Majesty next adverted to the hostilities on the River Plate, and expressed a hope that they might soon be terminated. Connected, as he long had been, with a great manufacturing county, it had been his lot to hear incessant complaints upon this subject from merchants interested in the export trade to those parts. At the same time he was bound to say he had not heard either from Staffordshire or elsewhere, the least complaint of want of attention on the part of the noble Earl lately at the head of the Foreign Department. Every attention had been paid, and every exertion had been made by the noble Lord, now at the head of that department, to terminate these hostilities. He most sincerely hoped, not only for the security of the interests of this country, but for the general interests of humanity, that strenuous efforts would be continued with this view. The paragraph in the Speech, which had usually the most prominent place in Speeches from the Throne, was the next to which he should briefly advert—namely, that Her Majesty's relations generally with Foreign Powers inspired Her with the fullest confidence in the maintenance of peace. Although their Lordships had long been accustomed to statements of this description, yet the immense interests of this empire in every part of the globe, to say nothing of the strong feeling, upon every ground of Christian duty, which all must have for desiring the continuance of peace, would always make this announcement upon the part of Her Majesty most welcome. With regard to another topic in the Speech, namely, the sanitary measures advised by Her Majesty for improving the health of towns; living, as he did, in a very populous county, he could bear testimony to the great importance which the manufacturing population attached to this subject. His noble Friend who now represented Her Majesty at Paris (the Marquess of Normanby) was among the first to invite the attention of Parliament to this subject; and he sincerely hoped that measures in relation to it might not long be delayed, for he knew that the discussions in Parliament, and the investigations which had taken place, had greatly augmented the natural anxiety with which the manufacturing population desired to see measures with this object. With these plain observations he should conclude by moving the Address. The noble Lord then read the following Address:—

MOST GRACIOUS SOVEREIGN,

WE, Your Majesty's most dutiful and loyal Subjects, the Lords Spiritual and Temporal, in Parliament assembled, beg leave to return Your Majesty our humble Thanks for Your Majesty's most gracious Speech from the Throne.

WE beg leave humbly to inform Your Majesty that we fully participate in the deep Concern which Your Majesty expresses in having to call our Attention to the Dearth of Provisions which prevails in Ireland and Parts of Scotland.

WE beg to state to Your Majesty that we lament to learn that in Ireland especially the Loss of the usual Food of the People has been the Cause of severe Sufferings, of Disease, and of greatly increased Mortality among the poorer Classes. And we deeply regret that Outrages, chiefly against Property, have become more frequent; and that in some Parts of the Country the Transit of Provisions has been rendered unsafe.

WE thank Your Majesty for informing us that, with a view to mitigate these Evils, very large Numbers of Men have been employed, and have received Wages, in pursuance of an Act passed in the last Session of Parliament; and we beg to assure Your Majesty that we will take into our Consideration the Propriety of giving our Sanction to the Deviations from that Act which have been authorized by the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, in order to promote more useful Employment. We thank Your Majesty for informing us that Means have been taken to lessen the Pressure of Want in Districts which are most remote from the ordinary Source of Supply; and that Outrages have been repressed, as far as it was possible, by the Military and Police.

WE humbly assure Your Majesty that we participate in the Satisfaction with which Your Majesty observes the exemplary Patience and Resignation of the People in many of the most distressed Districts.

WE beg to express to Your Majesty the Regret with which we learn that the Difficulty of obtaining adequate Supplies of Provisions has been augmented by the Deficiency of the Harvest in France and Germany, and in some other parts of Europe.

WE beg to state to your Majesty, that, in compliance with Your Majesty's Recommendation, we will not fail to consider what Measures may be required to alleviate the existing Distress, and to take into our serious Consideration whether, by increasing for a limited Period the Facilities for importing Corn from Foreign Countries, and by the Admission of Sugar more freely into Breweries and Distilleries, the Supply of Food may be beneficially augmented.

WE humbly assure Your Majesty that our earnest Consideration shall be directed to the permanent Condition of Ireland; and that we will avail ourselves of the Opportunity afforded by the absence of Political Excitement to take a dispassionate Survey of the social Evils which afflict that Part of the United Kingdom.

WE humbly thank Your Majesty for the Assurance that various Measures will be laid before us which are intended to raise the great Mass of the People in Comfort, to promote Agriculture, and to lessen the Pressure of that Competition for the Occupation of Land which has been the fruitful Source of Crime and Misery.

WE thank Your Majesty for the Information that the Marriage of the Infanta Luisa Fernanda of Spain to the Duke of Montpensier has given rise to a Correspondence between Your Majesty's Government and those of France and Spain.

WE humbly express our Acknowledgments to Your Majesty for informing us that the Extinction of the Free State of Cracow has appeared to Your Majesty to be so manifest a Violation of the Treaty of Vienna that Your Majesty has commanded that a Protest against that Act should be delivered to the Courts of Vienna, Petersburg, and Berlin, which were Parties to it; and for having directed that Copies of these several Papers shall be laid before us.

WE beg to assure Your Majesty that we have learned with great Satisfaction that Your Majesty entertains confident Hopes that the Hostilities in the River Plate, which have so long interrupted Commerce, may soon be terminated, and we gratefully acknowledge Your Majesty's Assurance that Your Efforts, in conjunction with those of the King of the French, will be earnestly directed to that End.

WE rejoice to be informed that Your Majesty's Relations generally with Foreign Powers inspire Your Majesty with the fullest Confidence in the Maintenance of Peace.

WE thank Your Majesty for informing us that Your Majesty has been graciously pleased to order every requisite Preparation to be made for putting into Operation the Act of the last Session of Parliament for the Establishment of Local Courts for the Recovery of Small Debts; and we beg to assure Your Majesty that we participate in the Hope expressed by Your Majesty, that the Enforcement of Civil Rights in all Parts of the Country to which the Act relates, may, by that Measure, be materially facilitated, in conformity with Your Majesty's gracious Recommendation.

We beg to state to Your Majesty that we will direct our Attention to the Measures which will be laid before us for improving the Health of Towns, an Object the Importance of which we do not fail to appreciate.

We assure Your Majesty that we fully participate in the deep Sense Your Majesty entertains of the Blessings which, after a Season of Calamity, have so often been vouchsafed to this Nation by a superintending Providence.

We humbly thank Your Majesty for confiding to us these important Matters; for the gracious Expression of Your Majesty's full Conviction that our Discussions will be guided by an impartial Spirit; and for Your Majesty's Hope, that by our Deliberations the Sufferings of Your People may be lightened, and their future Condition be improved.

Lord CAREW said, that in rising to second the Motion of his noble Friend, he could say with truth that it was always with pain and reluctance that he addressed their Lordships, and that reluctance was increased when he considered that in doing so he should have to advert to the distress and destitution at present existing in Ireland; but he felt he should be deserting the interests of the country to which he was bound by every tie of birth and family, if he shrank now from coming forward and stating his opinions upon that subject. He had been frequently asked since he came from Ireland whether the accounts of the state of things there had been exaggerated? He thought they had not. Last year the distress was confined to a particular district, but this year it was universal. A large part of the population of Ireland, and the poorest part, depended upon the potato for existence. That made them peculiarly liable to distress, and was now the cause of the extreme destitution in that country. It might be said that it was an unsound state of things that any people should depend upon a single article of food; but such was the fact; that food had been struck by an inscrutable visitation of Providence, and the people were starving. In other well-regulated countries employment was the surest test of population. It was not so in Ireland; but the facility with which the potato was produced was the cause which had led to the increased population there. The condition of the district of Skibbereen was most particularly before their Lordships. In former years, both in the quantity and quality of the potato, that district had been most abundant, from the fertilizing nature of the soil. The consequence had been, that a dense population sprang up, and they were now without food and starving. But other parts of the country were more or less affected, and even in the county with which he was more particularly connected (Wexford), there was now widespread distress; and he was sorry to say the small farmers, who were very numerous, were consuming the seed which in other years they had kept for future crops, and were coming upon the public works for employment. This visitation of the failure of the potato crop came early in August; then followed a kind of panic, and it became necessary to put in force the Labour-rate Act; and here he must do to the landed proprietors and farmers of Ireland that justice which was not always done to them, by saying, that when the necessity arose they did not shrink from making themselves liable for the repayment of large sums for labour, in order to provide the means of supporting the people; but the evils of the unproductive Labour Act came sooner than was foreseen. Last year the distress was partial, and much was done by private subscriptions; but this year the whole country came under one gigantic visitation, which it was impossible to exaggerate. The consequence had been, that many persons who were not competent, had been made overseers of the works, and much abuse of the public money had taken place. At length the evils of the system became so apparent that it was necessary for the Lord Lieutenant, upon his own responsibility, to deviate from the strict letter of that Act, and in doing so, he had acted most wisely and most energetically; and although he was still placed in great difficulties, it had led to most beneficial measures. It might be said that it was of no use to talk to a starving population; but yet his hope was, that when it should please Providence to withdraw this heavy affliction, the result would be the regeneration of his country. Allusion had been made in Her Majesty's most Gracious Speech to the cessation of political excitement in Ireland; and probably there was no country where there had been previously greater political bitterness or animosity. It was said that in Ireland there was no neutral ground; but now, Conservative and Liberal, Protestant and Roman Catholic, there met in the same assembly, in the common spirit of humanity, and the only contention among them was who should be foremost in the race of charity and beneficence. He had had peculiar opportunities of witnessing that, for it had been his duty for the last three or four months to organize committees of relief, and he might add his belief that in general those committees had done their duty. Every one who had written upon Ireland had testified to the patience with which the people of that country bore up against misery; but there was now no heart left to them, and nothing was more striking than their general depression. Her Majesty had alluded to the outrages committed in some parts of Ireland. It was true that in some parts of the country outrages had been committed; but in other parts the people had borne their sufferings with exemplary endurance. In his own county he felt pride in thinking that there had been no necessity for troops, and that hitherto there had been no outrage. Now that brought him to disabuse their Lordships' minds of much that had been said with respect to the purchase of fire-arms. It had been said, and he had been much struck with it, as it had a tendency to check private charity, that the money given was laid out by the people in the purchase of arms. He believed that the truth of such purchases had been much exaggerated; and that the majority of the persons who had purchased fire-arms were farmers who had purchased them for their own protection. He would mention one fact that came within his own knowledge. About ten days ago he saw in a newspaper, published in his own county—and he saw it with great regret—an advertisement announcing the sale, by auction, of 600 stand of arms. He immediately wrote to the editor upon the subject, and he would read the letter he had received in reply:—

> "Independent Office, Wexford, Jan. 13, 1847.
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> "My dear Lord—You need not be in the least alarmed about the sale of fire-arms, although I deem it both unseemly and unwise at this season of distress and destitution. It is a speculation of the Birmingham gun-makers, and so long as the law shall permit it, John Bull will make the most of his manufactures. The advertisement was taken in by my clerk, but were I present myself, I do not see how I could refuse it; indeed, I question if the law would permit a newspaper proprietor to refuse a legitimate advertisement. Only 30 were sold out of the 600, and those fowling pieces, although the majority of the arms consisted of blunderbusses, pistols, bayonets, &c., not one of the latter having been disposed of. It is the farmers' sons about the coast that are the principal purchasers of those sold, in order that they may be enabled to follow the wild-fowl; and, in these days of threatened famine and its dread concomitants, to protect their properties if any attack should be made thereon—an apprehension, I am sorry to say, which is daily gaining ground, in consequence of the increasing scarcity, and rapid rise in the price of provisions."

He stated this to show how much the account of the sale of fire-arms had been exaggerated. At the same time he should suggest that something should be done to regulate the Arms Act. The noble Lord said he would not trespass upon their Lordships' time by alluding to the other topics of the Speech, and concluded by seconding the Motion for the Address.

LORD STANLEY said: My Lords, it has been of late years the custom—in my opinion a custom generally conducive to the public interests—that, except upon some very extraordinary and unlooked-for emergency, Her Majesty's Government should abstain from introducing into the Speech delivered from the Throne, or the Address made by both Houses of Parliament, in answer to that Speech, I do not say any topics calculated to raise discussion, but any expressions which might necessarily call for hostile discussion, or tend to interrupt that unanimity which is so desirable on such an occasion. And, on the other hand, those who are opposed to the Government have generally felt that it was consistent at once with the public convenience, and their own duty and their wish, to abstain from pressing any premature discussion, and unnecessarily introducing subjects of controversy calculated to provoke contest at the very outset of the Session, and which might interfere with the presentation of an unanimous expression of duty and loyalty to Her Majesty, and of their respectful acknowledgment of their readiness to take into consideration those topics sketched out in the Speech from the Throne. My Lords, I do not mean to say that that practice has prevailed without exception. There have been cases well known in which the responsible Ministers of the Crown have felt it their duty, and of importance to the public service, that on the first occasion of meeting the Parliament the definite and positive opinion of Parliament should be taken on some great principle, introduced for the purpose of regulating their public conduct. And I need hardly remind the noble Lords opposite that occasions have occurred when the Opposition to the Government felt it to be its duty at the outset of the Session to introduce into the Address, in reply to the Speech from the Throne, amendments which determined, and on which turned, the very existence of that Administration. But, my Lords, these are extraordinary and unusual occurrences; and I am happy to express my confident belief, that as in the Speech from the Throne Her Majesty's Government have wisely abstained from introducing any expression that might necessarily lead to discussion; so, on the other hand, there is no wish on the part of those who do not repose their confidence in the present Government to embarrass them by any premature and vexatious opposition. My Lords, we cannot but recollect the peculiar circumstances under which the present Government occupy their seats. I must do them the justice to say, that they attained their present position by no sinister proceeding, nor by any unjustifiable acts—nay, further, that it was by no acts of their own, but by a combination of circumstances to which they in no way contributed; and I believe I may add, that many of them with sincere reluctance accepted the grave responsibility of office; and whatever may be our political feelings, I am sure that both in this and the other House of Parliament there will be a general feeling that a Government so situated would, in any circumstances of the country, have peculiar claims upon the forbearance of the House; and that it is the duty of Parliament not to embarrass a Government so circumstanced by any premature or unnecessary opposition. But, my Lords, I will go further and say, that whatever may be the personal claims of the present Government, grounded on their position as a party, I consider it infinitely less important than that higher claim which the country has upon our forbearance and moderation. The present Government do not hold office under ordinary circumstances—the responsibilities that press upon them are weighty, and serious, and most disastrous. The circumstances of the country are such as require, that not only every man should abstain from harassing the responsible Ministers of the Crown by vexatious hostility, but every man, without consideration or regard of the party who hold office, should lend his earnest and anxious assistance to those charged with the responsibility of public administration, in the task of alleviating the misery under which the country at present labours; and, if possible, of averting the evils and serious dangers which now threaten it. And I venture, on the part of my noble Friends on this side of the House, to assure Her Majesty's Government, that while we do not pretend to say that the composition of the Government in this, and more especially in the other House, is such as would enable us to rely with confidence on its measures, yet so long as the Government walks in the path of the constitution—so long as it abstains from tampering unnecessarily with the institutions of the country—so long as they resist the inducements held out to them by their more violent supporters to enter upon a course of rash and dangerous innovation and experiment, so long the Government, I am satisfied, may rest assured that from this side of the House they will receive not only no factious opposition, but a ready and disinterested support. My Lords, it is in this spirit and temper that I shall now venture to offer a few observations on the Speech that has been this day read from the Throne, and upon the speeches made by my two noble Friends, if I may be so permitted to call them, the Mover and Seconder of the Address, in answer to that Speech. My Lords, as there is nothing in the Speech from the Throne that calls for amendment, so I am happy to say that there is nothing in the speech of the noble Mover of the Address—although he certainly did travel somewhat out of the record, and entered upon some questions in which he did not express the opinions of the Government, but only his own individual feelings and opinions—or in that of the noble Seconder, to call for hostile comment, or to lead to a desire to make any objection or amendment not within the scope of the Speech itself. I cannot, however, refrain from noticing what appears to me a very significant omission in the Speech from the Throne. I mean, my Lords—and your Lordships cannot fail to have observed it—that the Speech makes no allusion, and contains no reference whatever, to the financial condition of the country. My Lords, perhaps this might not have excited attention, if it had not been that the last returns of the revenue exhibited in almost every department a considerable increase over the corresponding quarter of the preceding year; from which it might have been expected that Her Majesty's Government would have congratulated the country on the indications of prosperity conveyed by this circumstance; and I cannot but think it a somewhat significant intimation that the financial condition of the country is not so satisfactory as might appear on the face of these returns, that no notice or reference to the financial condition of the country should appear in the Speech from the

Throne. My Lords, the fact is, I have no doubt, that there has been from various causes a great consumption of exciseable articles in this country, and also an increase in the imports of foreign articles, swelling the receipt of the customs, and making up for the reduction on other articles. But, my Lords, I am afraid it will be found that the indication of prosperity denoted by the prosperous state of the revenue, under these heads, is not an indication that can be depended on. I am afraid it will be found, that though there has been this large increase in the imports of the country, there has not been, to say the least of it, a corresponding increase in the exports; so that if the whole revenue has prospered by reason of the large importations from abroad, the home industry of the country has not to the same extent been encouraged by corresponding exports. If this, then, be the case, as I believe it to be, I say there is another indication also which appears to me to be of somewhat an ominous character, to be found in the great reduction which has taken place in the premium on Exchequer Bills. I find that, whereas at no very remote period, Exchequer Bills were selling at a premium of from 35 to 40, they are, at the moment in which I speak, not, I believe, at more than five or six premium; and I apprehend before long, it will be the painful duty of the Chancellor of the Exchequer to raise the rate of interest on Exchequer Bills, if he does not expect them to fall below par. I believe that that operation is now at hand; and that it has already begun, which must be the consequence of a continued disproportion between the exports and imports of the country. I see already a considerable exportation of bullion taking place from this country; and I am afraid that, notwithstanding the state of prosperity indicated by the customs' returns, you will before this day six months see the effects of continued imports over exports, by a very large and very inconvenient reduction in the amount of bullion in the coffers of the Bank. Passing, then, to topics that are included in the Speech, I am quite sure, my Lords, that there is no one who will not rejoice that there is no danger of interruption to the general peace of Europe. But, I confess, my Lords, that I do not altogether found that confidence, which I, for one, fully entertain, so much on that to which it is ascribed in the Speech from the Throne—namely, the state of our foreign relations—as to the growing conviction in this and all other countries of the impolicy, the folly, and the wickedness of war. I believe that what would some years ago have almost inevitably produced war, would now be repudiated by the good sense of these days as utterly insufficient to justify such an extremity. I am sure, my Lords, that in a commercial nation like this—powerful as it may be—capable of the greatest exertions in war—peace is not only desirable, but all but necessary. I believe that to be a conviction deeply rooted in the minds of the people of this country; and although on the continent of Europe the generation has almost passed away which personally witnessed the horrors of war, and this which is now living, though it has experienced the blessings of peace, yet has not had the means of contrasting them with the horrors of a different state of things, yet I believe on the Continent also there is a general appreciation of the blessings of peace, and a sincere desire that it should not be frivolously endangered. I cannot say I look with satisfaction to the state of our relations with Foreign Powers. My Lords, among the Powers of Europe there is no one, in my humble judgment, with which it is more essential that this country should be on terms, not of amity merely, but of cordial co-operation and union, than the great neighbouring State of France. My Lords, throughout the world—in every quarter of the globe—we have with that Power innumerable points of contact, which, if there be not a thorough good understanding betwean the Governments of England and France, must from points of contact become points of collision, perpetually endangering the peace of the world, and leading of necessity to inharmonious action between the two great Powers, whose harmony and concert are of the utmost importance to the maintenance of the general tranquillity. Entertaining this opinion, I cannot but deeply regret the altered tone which appears to have prevailed in the course of the last six months in the relations between the Government of this country and that of France. My Lords, I do not apprehend any disturbance to the peace of the world. I am perfectly ready to admit that it would be inconvenient and unwise to enter into a detailed examination now of the statements which, although officially submitted to the Legislature of another country, have not been officially submitted to this; or to judge the conduct of the noble Lord at the head of the Foreign Department on a mere perusal of documents which, of course to a certain degree, have been selected by a party opposed to him in the discussion. At the same time, my Lords, it is impossible not to see, and seeing, not to regret deeply, that that cordial good understanding which, in the time of my noble Friend the late Foreign Secretary, subsisted between this country and France, has been materially altered for the worse by the events of the last four or five months. My noble Friend alluded to another topic to which the Speech refers, and on which he most wisely refrained from calling for an expression of opinion on the part of the House—namely, the marriage of the Infanta Luisa Fernanda of Spain with the Duc de Montpensier. The reference to this topic is certainly most vague and dubious. Her Majesty informs us that "the marriage of the Infanta Luisa Fernanda of Spain to the Duke of Montpensier, has given rise to a correspondence between my Government and those of France and Spain." My Lords, I must say I cannot refrain from expressing my regret at much that I see in the tone of that correspondence. Up to the period of the change of Government it appears to me that the communications between the representatives of the two Crowns, if not always in accordance with the principles laid down by sound reason, were, at least conducted with entire frankness; that the two parties acted on a feeling of mutual confidence, and with reliance on the honour of each other; and, moreover, that in this particular event which has led to so much discussion in the course of the last few months, there was every prospect that a conclusion would have been arrived at unanimously and harmoniously between the representatives of the two countries. I am not saying where the fault rests; but I say it is melancholy to behold two statesmen representing the Foreign Departments of the two greatest States of Europe bandying about recriminations of underhand proceedings, of the suppression and interpolation of documents —of secret intentions to accomplish that from which they were debarred by good faith and by honour. I read them with pain, not only on account of the statesmen themselves—but I read them with much more pain because I see in the possibility of such a correspondence having passed, an alteration in tone and temper between the two Governments which bodes ill for a cordial understanding and co-operation, however consistent with the amicable relations subsisting. My Lords, of the marriage in question, while I dissent—and I must take the earliest opportunity of saying so—from the construction put by the noble Lord at the head of Foreign Affairs on one portion of the Treaty of Utrecht—on which construction, however, I see the noble Lord has entered his formal remonstrance and protest against the marriage —while I differ from that construction, and while I differ, also, from the construction which, on the part of M. Guizot and the French Government, has been put on the stipulations of the Treaty of Utrecht—though I do not pretend to pass any judgment on the comparative merits of the case, this I say, that the correspondence, let the fault rest where it will, has taken an unhappy and unfortunate tone, and that the result has been a measure adopted by France, not in my judgment detrimental to or affecting the material interests of this country, but carried on in a manner which, in point of fact, is, to say the least of it, a slight and discourtesy towards this country, such as I humbly venture to say would not have been passed on it in the time of my noble Friend the late Secretary. I must say also that this misfortune of the noble Viscount at the head of the Foreign Office, has not stood single or alone. My Lords, I cannot but think that that unfortunate alteration of tone between the Governments of England and France has had something to do with another measure, against which we are told that Her Majesty's Government have entered their formal protest. My Lords, I do not wish, although the noble Lord who moved the Address entered somewhat fully into this question, and expressed a very strong opinion as to the conduct of the three Northern Powers in the occupation and extinction of Cracow as an independent State—I do not wish at the present moment to express any opinion as to the fact whether or not the annexation was justifiable by circumstances of which I am no judge, not having them before me—I do not mean even to express an opinion as to whether that annexation is strictly to be called a manifest violation of the Treaty of Vienna—that that annexation is at variance with the agreements and stipulations of the Treaty entered into between Austria, Prussia, and Russia—entered into, I believe, under the auspices of England, and confirmed by the signature of the Powers, and incorporated in the Treaty of Vienna. And yet I am not sure that good grounds might not be shown, on the footing of precedents, of the example of former treaties, and the example of this Treaty of

Vienna itself, that a violation of the stipulations of a treaty incorporated in a subsequent treaty, provided that violation met with the assent of all the three parties to the original agreement, is not to be held and deemed a violation of the treaty into which it has been incorporated. I do not wish to express a positive opinion on the subject at present. The Answer to Her Majesty's Speech does not necessarily require that we should offer any opinion on that subject; for we merely acknowledge the information from Her Majesty that it appeared to Her Majesty to be a violation of the Treaty of Vienna, and that, consequently, a protest has been entered by Her Majesty's Government. I suspend till we shall see the papers—I suspend till we shall have an opportunity of discussing the subject—the formation of any positive opinion as to whether such a violation of the treaty has taken place as to justify so grave a step as the insertion in the Speech from the Throne of a declaration that three Powers in Europe have violated their solemn engagements with this country, and that that violation has been followed on the part of this country by a late and unavailing protest. I hope we shall have laid before us not only the protest of Her Majesty's Government after the fact, but also any information which the Government may have received from their diplomatic agents at the several Courts of these three Powers, detailing the course likely to be adopted, and thus enabling Her Majesty's Government to have taken steps, if they thought fit, previously to, rather than after, the accomplishment of these facts. But again, it is not to be denied, and I do not pretend to deny it, that the act of the three Powers in breaking through engagements entered into by themselves, but under the mediation and auspices of England, and taking that step without consulting, and without taking any step to communicate their intention of making such a change to the Powers under whose auspices these engagements were made, was between nations a slight and discourtesy which, I will venture to say, would not have been put upon us if it had been understood that the understanding between France and England was still on the same cordial footing as before. I approach now a question infinitely more interesting, infinitely more important to the well-being of this country, than anything connected with foreign policy; I refer to the awful visitation which has afflicted from one end of it to the other the sister island of Ireland. I believe, my Lords, that no exaggeration can go beyond the awful reality; and I am quite confident that, for the prevention and palliation of the present evil—for the purpose of rescuing this country from the guilt of permitting a large portion of its population knowingly to starve, there is no sacrifice, no efforts which Her Majesty's Government can call upon the people of this country to make, which will not be cheerfully responded to by the Members of your Lordships' House, and by the representatives of the people in the other House, who will in that case speak the deliberate and cordial sense of the whole country. I do not wish to speak harshly of the measures taken by the Government for the alleviation of the evil. I have had some little experience of the Irish people. I know, in the first place, that the extent of the visitation came upon the Government in a great measure by surprise. I know, when it did come on, the difficulty of obtaining correct and trustworthy information; I know that with the best exertions of the Government there will always be local abuses and local interests perpetually meeting and contending with the Government, thwarting their best intended efforts, and converting their best devised measures to some purpose of petty local and personal interest. I do not wish to speak disrespectfully of the Irish people; but I know that in that country, in the administration of relief, and more especially when that relief comes from the public purse, it requires, to say the least of it, on the part of the Government, a degree of watchfulness, and circumspection not required in this, and probably in most other countries. If the measures taken by the Government were insufficient—if they were not entirely adequate to the object which they had in view—I am not here for the purpose of embarrassing the Government by any captious objections on the subject. But I say that great errors have been committed. I require no more proof than the speeches of my noble Friends who moved and seconded the Address, who admitted that the Labour-rate Act was a great blunder, and had had the effect of diverting capital which might have been usefully and profitably employed, instead of being compulsorily applied to works absolutely useless, and in many cases positively injurious. The landlords, who, as my noble Friend says, are for the most part not men in the same affluent circumstances as those in this country, at the very moment when they were using their best exertions to meet the calamity which had come upon them and their tenants alike, were prevented from employing their capital in the manner most advantageous to themselves, and compelled by an authority which they were unable to resist, to employ the capital which they knew was needed for the sustentation of their tenantry and the improvement of their estates, in filling up imperceptible hollows and lowering invisible hills; and the effect was actually this—that throughout the length and breadth of the land enormous sums of money were squandered for the purpose of making the face of the country absolutely impassable. I believe it was no overstrained description which was given by my noble Friend who moved the Address. I do not concur with those who censure Her Majesty's Government, when they had discovered the insufficiency of their measures, for not calling Parliament together for the purpose of amending them. My Lords, I think the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, under the circumstances in which he found himself placed, exercised a wise discretion in taking it upon himself to remedy the defects of the Act, even although in doing so he went beyond the letter of the law; and certain I am that neither in this or the other House will there be a moment's hesitation in giving the Lord Lieutenant and the Government the indemnity for which I presume they will apply. Nor do I think that the meeting of Parliament would have been well advised, or could have produced any good result. In the first place, the presence of the Irish landlords was imperatively required on the spot to apply remedies to the existing distress. The result of the meeting of Parliament, under such circumstances, would have been to cause great delay and procrastination; many schemes would have been proposed, and many plausible objections raised; and while Parliament was deliberating the people would have starved. I have, therefore, no fault to find with the discretion exercised by the Government in not calling Parliament together, but acting on their own responsibility. My noble Friend went on to comment on the letter of Mr. Labouchere, and stated that such were the clogs and impediments thrown in the way, that it, in fact, became practically almost a dead letter. Another Act was passed for the encouragement of the fisheries, the construction of piers, and other works of that description; but, by some unhappy fatality, says my noble Friend who moved the Address, the Act was so framed that no person could avail himself of it. If there be a point, however, in which I should be disposed to think that Her Majesty's Government did not act up to their duty under the circumstances—under the mighty responsibility which had fallen on them, I think they were led into that error by too great, too rigid attention to the principles of competition in trade, and the doctrines, the abstract doctrines of political economy. The doctrines of political economy are framed, no doubt, to meet general and permanent circumstances; but it is impossible for any man to say that circumstances shall not arise so grave, so serious and awful, as to compel a Government, unless they would incur a much heavier responsibility, to discard the principles of political economy, and act on that which, though practically at variance with those doctrines, may be calculated to meet and remedy the exigency of the moment. Now, my Lords, I do not say that the Government should take upon themselves a proposition so monstrous as to attempt to give food to the whole population of Ireland; nay more, I do not say that the Government ought to have sold food to the people of Ireland at less than a fair mercantile price, because I concur in the opinion that if they had done so they would have done more harm than good, by interfering with the legitimate operations of commerce, and have prevented the free supply of the market. But this I do say—and I have yet to learn that efficient remedial steps have been taken in the matter by Her Majesty's Government, although I see, indeed, in the Speech just delivered from the Throne, a declaration to the effect that "means have been taken to lesson the pressure of want in districts which are most remote from the ordinary sources of supply," and what these means have been I presume we shall be informed hereafter—this I say, that, so far as we have yet been informed, there have been large districts, and populous districts, although not comprising any great towns, remote from the sea-coast, and from any considerable markets, in which Her Majesty's Government might, and I do think ought, to have established suitable provision depôts, for the purpose of assuring food to the people at a rate which would have guaranteed the public from any loss, and which at the same time would not have interfered with fair mercantile speculation; and they might by that means, I have no doubt, have opened, as a similar plan had opened on a former occasion, large stores in the hands of petty local speculators, who held back supplies for the purpose of afterwards insisting on exorbitant and famine prices, but who would, with the prospect of other supplies coming into the market, have offered their stores on just terms. I do regret—I will not use a stronger term—I do regret that Her Majesty's Government, under the circumstances in which Ireland has been placed, have not to a greater extent than they have done availed themselves of this simple, practicable, and tried remedy—namely, interfering not with fair competition, but interfering with the markets in those districts where the supply was necessarily in a few hands, and where there was the appearance on the part of those few hands of a determination to withhold that supply for the purpose of enabling them to obtain exorbitant prices.

The DUKE of WELLINGTON here observed, that that course had been taken on a former occasion.

LORD STANLEY continued: My noble and gallant Friend reminds the House that that step had been taken by the late Government, and taken, be it observed, under much less trying circumstances. It was taken by Her Majesty's Government in the year 1845; and you have in the papers which have been submitted to Parliament, not one, five, ten, or twenty, but repeated and almost innumerable testimonies to the effect, that without any loss to the public that wise and prudent measure had led to the opening of stores and the bringing forward of supplies, which, until that interference, had been kept back by parties who wished to avail themselves unfairly of the public distress. I say there is no effort which Her Majesty's Government can call on the people of this country to make, which will not be cheerfully responded to for the purpose of relieving that great and overwhelming calamity by which the people of Ireland have unfortunately been overtaken. But there remains behind permanent measures to be adopted with regard to Ireland; and there are two or three measures rather referred to than distinctly stated in Her Majesty's Speech, to which I wish particularly to allude. One of these is expressly stated to be a temporary measure for meeting a temporary evil—I allude to that proposition which relates to the "increasing for a limited period the facilities for importing corn from foreign countries." The gloss and interpretation put upon that passage by my noble Friend who moved the Address was, that it might be advisable to reduce the small duty of 4*s.* a quarter which is now charged on the introduction of foreign corn. My noble Friend afterwards hinted at another measure, which he said he did not understand to be in the contemplation of Her Majesty's Government, but which, as a temporary measure, I confess I agree with him in thinking is even less open to objection than that to which the Speech appears to refer—I mean a temporary measure for the purpose of affording a greater amount of tonnage for the importation of corn into the ports of the United Kingdom. I believe that whatever doubts there may be as to the amount of corn actually in this country—and upon that subject there are very conflicting opinions—for my part, I believe that the amount of corn in this country is very much underrated; but this there can be no doubt about—the amount of corn in America: I do not now speak of other countries, in which, as it appears on authority to which free-traders must be disposed to give credence, there are large supplies of corn waiting for importation into this country—for that is the effect of a statement of Mr. Cobden with regard to the ports of the Mediterranean—but there can be no doubt that in America there are large supplies which have been and are prevented from reaching this country by the want of sufficient tonnage for its introduction under the existing navigation laws. The result is, that there has been an enormous disproportion between the price of foreign corn in the countries where it has been produced, and its price in our markets, and large profits have been realized by traders and importers. As a temporary measure—and I speak of it only as a temporary measure for the relief of a temporary emergency—I do not think that under these circumstances any opposition would be offered to a proposition for increasing the tonnage available for the introduction of corn into this country by a temporary relaxation of the navigation laws. With regard to a proposal for reducing the existing duty on the importation of foreign corn, I hope that none of your Lordships will think that those who are specially connected with the agricultural interest are in the slightest degree biassed upon that point by a consideration of the modicum of protection which still remains. I do not wish to express any positive opinion at the present moment as to the prudence and the wisdom of adopting the remedy in question. But my noble Friend has said, in recommending that measure to your Lordships, that it might, no doubt, be alleged that the whole or the greater part of the difference of duty might, under existing circumstances, go into the pockets of the foreign grower. My noble Friend went even further, for he said, I think, that it was very likely it would be so. Now, my Lords, that candid admission on the part of my noble Friend must be a just ground for a consideration on the part of the Government and of the House, whether the humane object which the Government have in view will be, in point of fact, effected or obtained by a temporary abolition of the 4*s*. duty; and whether, in point of fact, our supply of corn will thereby be in the slightest degree increased, or the price in the slightest degree diminished; but, *pro tanto*, there is the strong fact, indisputable and undisputed, that we shall lose the whole amount of the revenue which is now derived from the introduction of foreign corn, and which, according to my noble Friend, will go into the pocket of the foreign producer. There is another subject on which I am not sure whether Her Majesty's Government propose a temporary or a permanent measure. I allude to a measure permitting the introduction of sugar into breweries and distilleries. I believe that the expression "for a limited period," is applied to the allusion to increased facilities for the importation of corn from foreign countries; but it does not appear to me to be applied to the admission of sugar into breweries and distilleries. And yet both these measures are put forward in the paragraph in which we are desired to consider what further measures are required to alleviate the existing distress. Again, I express no opinion as to the expediency or propriety of this further relaxation. As a temporary measure, in the present state of the price of barley, it would, probably, inflict little or no injury on the home grower. But, at the same time, you must not forget that a large admission of sugar for the purpose of being used in breweries and distilleries immediately, and without previous notice, cannot but have the effect of raising the price of sugar in this country, the cheapening of which your Lordships affirmed in the last Session to be an object of prime necessity. But if you introduce sugar into breweries and distilleries, that will also add to the arguments and the reasons for which a large body of agriculturists in this country are earnestly desiring a repeal of the malt tax—a measure which I presume that Her Majesty's Government would hardly be prepared to assent to in the present state of things. I think, however, that if they are not so prepared, it would be wise in them to consider well whether they should inflict a further injury on the agriculture of this country, which would strengthen the grounds of just complaint with regard to the pressure of the malt tax; and whether the advantages to be gained by the introduction of sugar into distilleries would be commensurate with the inconvenience which would be caused by such a measure. There are other measures referred to in the Speech from the Throne in such vague terms that it is impossible for me to offer any observations upon them. My Lords, it may be true that at the present moment there is an absence of political excitement in Ireland; but I am bound to say that looking to the state of Ireland, and the state of feeling there, this does not appear to me to be a favourable, even though it may be a necessary occasion for considering calmly and dispassionately the social evils of that country. My Lords, that occasion may be forced upon us; but we shall not come to the discussion with advantage in a state of a pauperized landed gentry and of a starving peasantry—we shall not come to the discussion of the question in the way best fitted for taking the most dispassionate survey of the best remedy for existing evils. But if the measures to be laid before us should be calculated to produce that effect which Her Majesty's Government appear confidently to anticipate—if they should be calculated to elevate the condition of the great mass of the people—if they should be likely to promote agriculture, and lessen that competition for land which has been the fruitful source of so large a portion of the misery of Ireland: I say that in that case there are no men in this country who would more cordially rejoice than I and those with whom I cooperate should do, at seeing such measures introduced; and although we might look with some doubt and hesitation on the expediency of portions, at least, of the Ministerial policy; yet if Her Majesty's Government should on the whole realize the great ends which they have in view, they will, I am sure, meet with nothing but gratitude on the part of the country, and cordial co-operation on the part of Parliament. I do not say that they should yield to extravagant or exorbitant demands—I do not say that they should throw the pauperism of Ireland as a permanent burden on this country; but I say that they ought to proceed on two maxims: first, that the people of Ireland must not be permitted to starve; and next, that the pauperism of Ireland must be provided for out of the property of Ireland. But, subject to these two conditions, I hope that Her Majesty's Government will take counsel of those best acquainted and most conversant with the state of Ireland. It has been of late the fashion grievously and indiscriminately to abuse the landed proprietors of Ireland. I am not in all cases their defender; I am not their eulogist; but this I must say, that it appears to me that the measure of abuse has fallen on them just in the inverse proportion of their deserts. I believe it may now be said of them, that "*delicta majorum immeriti luunt.*" I believe there never was a period when the landlords of Ireland were more bent than at present on discharging to the utmost, and beyond the utmost, of their power the duties imposed upon them; I believe there never was a time when the landlords of Ireland were less inclined to dispute the abstract truth of the maxim that "property has its duties as well as its rights." But looking, my Lords, to the present state of Ireland, you must not—as was well observed by my noble Friend opposite—judge the position of the Irish by the position of the English landed proprietor. The Irish landlord is placed in a position exceedingly different from the landlord of this country. The greater the control over a property of which a landlord is the nominal possessor, the weightier is the responsibility which attaches to the rights of property; and the responsibility of that duty increases in proportion as the position in which a proprietor stands enables him to exercise a full and entire control over the property which he holds. And, my Lords, if you were to find in this country a state of things in which property, not by your act, had been indefinitely burdened—if you had to deal with a pauperized tenantry, incapable of effecting any improvements themselves, and yet strenuously refusing, although tenants at will, to give you the slightest interest for any capital which you might be disposed to expend in improvements—if you were to find that the custom and the feeling of the country went to this, that however much one of the owners of those small holdings is impoverishing and ruining your property, so long as he can contrive to eke out his miserable amount of rent, however inadequate it may be to the real value of the land—so long as the tenant at will has the absolute right to remain on your property, impeding every improvement, and refusing any interest for the money you may be ready to advance for the purpose—and I have known in my own experience of tenants refusing to pay one shilling for the erection of a comfortable house, and maintaining their hold of the property by the force of public opinion—if such were the case, would not any man say that it would be impossible to expect that a landlord under such circumstances should improve his property? And yet I must say, after some experience of the condition of many parts of Ireland, and some personal knowledge on the subject, there are landlords in that country who hold their property under those conditions. Now, it would be impossible to say, that under such a state of things property has devolved upon it the same duties, inasmuch as it has not the same rights which are properly on the one hand claimed, and on the other hand exercised, in this more fortunately situated country. Therefore, my Lords, I trust that in the measures which you may have to adopt, in the sacrifices even which you may have to call for, you will not venture on any rash or hasty step as regards the landlords of Ireland, without taking into consideration the real circumstances in which they are placed; and that you will not expect them to exert themselves beyond the possibility of their means, and beyond the possibility even of persons who might have a full and unlimited command of capital. One more word, my Lords, and I have done. I hold that one of the great objects with regard to Ireland is to facilitate and encourage the introduction of capital; for I believe that the want of steady employment, the want of any class dependent on wages for their daily existence, is that which leads to that pertinacious clinging to land, as the sole means of subsistence, which is the parent of the degradation of the Irish peasant, of the low state of Irish agriculture, of the wretched state of Irish society, and is the absolute bar to any improvement, agricultural or social. My Lords, I hope you will consider well, and that Her Majesty's Government will consider well, not the means of compelling a temporary outlay on unproductive works—not, as my noble Friend must forgive me for saying, venturing on any measures which may be calculated according to him to brush away the antiquated notions of old lawyers with regard to the law of entail; but that you will consider the rights of property, both of the individuals, the present occupiers, and those of the reversionists. My noble Friend has referred, in language which rather alarmed me, to that (I believe) most innocent and useful measure recommended by the Committee of your Lordships which sat last year for the purpose of facilitating the transfer of property by diminishing its enormous legal expenses. I hope that what my noble Friend said with respect to facilitating the transfer of property, has no relation or connexion with those antiquated notions of old lawyers, of which he spoke. I only trust and hope that in the measures adopted for the future and permanent good of Ireland, you will in the first place consult the landlords of Ireland, and derive what benefit you may from the opinions of those who ought to be the best qualified to form them on that subject. But I think there are also other resources which may be usefully and profitably called into action. I believe there are public companies quite willing to devote a large amount of capital to reproductive works in Ireland; to works which, extended over the face of the country, would not only give much employment at present, but would ultimately lead to a considerable improvement in the condition of the people of Ireland generally, and with advantage to the parties embarking in such a speculation. I believe that if by the co-operation of such bodies, your Lordships were to decide on encouraging the introduction of capital into Ireland, making yourselves responsible only for the safe investment of that capital, as far as personal and political security goes—I believe that you would confer an inestimable boon on Ireland—that you would supply, in a great measure, the present deficiency of capital, and introduce an amount of foreign capital which would create a desire for permanent employment by wages; and that desire for permanent employment by wages I am convinced you must in some measure excite, foster, and promote if you wish to do anything for the permanent good of Ireland. My Lords, I do not presume to occupy your attention with any details at this moment. I throw out these suggestions for the consideration of your Lordships, and that of Her Majesty's Government; but allow me, in conclusion, to say, as I stated at the commencement of these observations, that I am quite satisfied that in legislating for the welfare of Ireland, provided you exclude those religious and political differences and considerations which have ever distracted that country, and made her the battle-field of factions; and provided you honestly labour for the social improvement of Ireland, I am quite satisfied that all differences of religious opinion, all distinctions of party will be merged—that all dissensions will be forgotten—that all questions as to who should carry those great measures will be sunk; and that Her Majesty's Government may rely on the cordial co-operation and support of those whom they have been accustomed to look upon as their political opponents.

The MARQUESS of LANSDOWNE said, he did not feel himself called upon to add anything to the statements of his noble Friends the Mover and Seconder of the Address, although he felt it necessary to offer a few observations after the speech of the noble Lord who had just sat down, of parts of which he had to complain — in parts of which he entirely concurred—but in other parts of which the noble Lord had been undoubtedly led to depart from the sort of contract which he had seemed to have made with himself at the outset; and whilst he had declared the inexpediency of debating questions upon which their Lordships had as yet no information, but upon which they would soon have an opportunity of delivering their opinions considerately, he had been led, without that information, and, what was still worse, with imperfect information, to intimate at least something like an opinion, and, indeed, something like a censure, upon some portions of the conduct of Her Majesty's Government. He (the Marquess of Lansdowne) would therefore beg to inform their Lordships, that, in pursuance of the intimation which Her Majesty had that day given from the Throne, he would have the honour of submitting to them, and that in a very few days, the most complete and perfect information upon the two great events and subjects of inquiry which had been referred to by the noble Lord; upon the circumstances which had occurred—circumstances which had not injured the interests of the country, but which had affected the foreign relations of England; and upon those which related to the state of Ireland; upon both of which their Lordships would shortly be put in possession of the fullest information that was possible to obtain. He would beg to offer a few words to the House upon the most interesting, and, he must add, the most appalling, of those topics—the state of Ireland. He should address himself to their Lordships, not in justification of the past acts of Her Majesty's Ministers—not in explanation of their future acts—because both of those cases would be best understood when he should come to speak with papers in his hand—but in reference to some of the observations which the noble Lord (Lord Stanley) had made upon the subject; but if he did not then enter at much length into those topics, he could assure their Lordships that it was not from not feeling a proper sense of the vast importance of the subject, nor from any desire to withhold from that assembly any information which might tend to assist its deliberations, but merely because he did not wish to add to the gloom which the consideration of such matters might be reasonably supposed to impart to a discussion on the presentation of an Answer to the Speech of the Crown. The noble Lord opposite had passed some observations of undeserved censure on the conduct of the present Government with regard to the measures it had adopted for the purpose of meeting the prevailing distress. Those measures had been adopted under the pressure of circumstances which called for the immediate employment of large numbers of the suffering population of Ireland, and at the time there had existed no reasons to suppose that anything like that demand for public works in Ireland would have taken place, for the purpose of meeting the increased distress. On the one side there had been an extraordinary degree of precipitancy in acting on these measures, and this had led to a demand for public works from the Government, on the other side, to a far greater extent than could have been expected. This naturally brought about the undertaking and execution of works which were said to have been manifestly useless. But when he (the Marquess of Lansdowne) had introduced those measures to their Lordships, he had distinctly stated the grounds upon which he asked for their consent, and had distinctly repudiated the doctrine, that the people were to be employed upon useless works. But he was not prepared to call road-making in all cases useless; and he was sure that it would be admitted to be, in many instances, as useful a work as the public could have done for them; and also, to a certain extent, a productive one, not only in giving employment to the people, but in stimulating the landlords to such undertakings as would eventually tend to lessen the pressure of expense on themselves. However, with the growth of famine, it had become imperatively necessary to give extension to these Parliamentary measures. Lord Besborough had undertaken to do this; and he (the Marquess of Lansdowne) was glad the noble Lord opposite was not displeased with the course the Government had adopted in some respects, as well as that it had not thought proper to call Parliament together, in order to give its sanction and effect to that extension of the measure alluded to. The Government had felt, at that time, that the calling together of Parliament would be the means of much injury to Ireland, by summoning from that country a large number of her landed gentry, whose residence in the place at that period was indispensable to the repose, the good order, and welfare of the country at large; and the presence of those gentlemen had been freely given, and usefully employed, and had they not been on the spot, that great alleviation of the existing calamity which had resulted from it would not have taken place. The noble Lord opposite did not disapprove, it appeared, of that portion of Her Majesty's Speech in which it was recommended that an addition should be made to the supply of the food of the people of this empire by affording increased facilities to the importation of food from other countries. He (the Marquess of Lansdowne) was not then going to discuss the details of that extensive subject, for the consideration of which a more fitting opportunity would be soon afforded. Neither did he wish to enter upon the question as to whether the profits of that importation would go to the foreigner or not. But the question for their Lordships then to consider was, what would add to the amount of human food in this empire under the most fearful visitation which had ever visited it before; and for his own part he was prepared to say, that such an increase of food ought to take place, even if every shilling which the addition might make was to go into the pockets of the foreign grower. He would ask whether his noble Friend opposite was aware, or not, of the state of trade in this respect? or how corn was now conveying from America, or Odessa, or New Orleans? Other countries were offering all the encouragement which they could at the present moment, by the relaxation of their navigation laws, to invite those places to supply them with corn. For his own part he was prepared to set aside for the present the legislation and the Corn Act of last Session, if by doing so he could bring 10,000 or 100,000 quarters of corn more into this country. Great masses of the people in Ireland who had formerly subsisted almost exclusively on the potato, were now living on foreign corn; and could any one for a moment doubt that any means by which the supply for this additional demand, made by 5,000,000 or 6,000,000 of people, would be increased, was a measure which ought to be passed without delay, to meet the exigencies of the country, up to the period of the next harvest? In proposing these measures, the Government did not wish to interfere with the settlement made last year with respect to the question of the corn laws; it did not wish to introduce any proposition calculated to interfere with that long-discussed and most difficultly-arranged subject. But most calamitous circumstances had since arisen which put an end at once to all considerations but that single one of getting into this country at once such a proper and abundant supply of food as her inhabitants required. The consideration of this question naturally led to another, namely, that of the consumption and admission of sugar into our breweries and distilleries. This, he admitted, was intended to be a permanent measure, though it had been introduced then in connexion with one which was confessedly only of a temporary nature, and calculated to meet the present emergency. With respect also to the relaxation of the navigation laws, which was contemplated, it was to be a temporary measure, as well as the suspension of the corn laws: it was intended by it to admit every vessel to bring foreign corn into this country for the consumption of its people, no matter from what place soever she might come. If the noble Lord opposite would look into the reports relative to the shipping interest of France, he would find that, with a similar system of navigation laws to our own, vessels were at this moment bringing corn into France, in consequence of the relaxation of those laws, which would otherwise come into this country. With respect to the immediate effect of those proposed measures, he trusted it would not be inconsiderable; and, therefore, he trusted that noble Lords opposite would agree to the proposition to suspend, until some day to be hereafter named, all restrictions whatsoever on the importation of foreign corn into this country. But he would not then go into the discussion of the details of these various measures, for more regularly entering upon which he would give notice for an early day. But when the noble Lord opposite blamed the Government for having adhered too strictly to what were called the rigid principles of political economy, all he had to say, in reply, was, that if ever there was a case in which an adherence to alleged principles of political economy would have been attended with the most fatal and disastrous results, it would have been an interference on the part of Government to prevent a supply of food being imported from every part of the world where it was most abundant, when its own people were starving for the want of it. Had the Government interfered with the supply of food by the private exertion of merchants, the effects would have been most disastrous. Private enterprise was the natural safeguard of the nation, and he confidently asserted, that if the mercantile interest had not received the fullest assurances from the Government that they would not compete with them in the market, they would not have acted as they had done. Many applications had been made before a ship had been despatched, to know whether it was or not the intention of Government to set up as sellers themselves, and thus enter into competition with the merchants; and the assurances which had then been wisely given, had been as wisely adhered to. It was then stated that in a season of great distress the Government might become purchasers, and that it would endeavour to equalise the price of provisions, and in places where no traders existed, to set up depôts for the supply of food to the people; and it was to this course that their Lordships and the country were indebted for the fact that the prices of provisions were no higher than they were at present. He would not refer more particularly at that moment to what the noble Lord had said in allusion to the conduct of the resident Irish gentry; but he should remark that their conduct in meeting a most trying emergency, under circumstances of the greatest difficulty, was beyond all praise. Too much allowance could not be made for the position in which they had been placed: they were surrounded by and had had to contend with distress, with difficulty and danger, and they had conducted themselves in a manner which reflected the highest honour upon them. On the subject of the Spanish marriage, it would be unnecessary for him to dwell, as the correspondence relative to it would be soon before the Legislature. It would then be found that the policy of the present Government on the subject of that marriage was identical with that of the late Government, although the noble Lord opposite seemed to intimate otherwise. The documents would be produced, and he wished to make no other use of them than for the purpose of defending their policy. There had been no departure in it from a wish to maintain that cordial understanding between the French Government and that of Great Britain, which he admitted to be so much for the benefit of Europe and the rest of the world, and which he for one would never relinquish without great regret. With regard to that understanding, he would say no more on the present occasion than suggest to noble Lords that the less there was of angry debate on the subject, the more likely and the more speedily would the good understanding between the two countries be resumed; for his own part, he must say that he should be glad to see the means of replacing that understanding on anything like a satisfactory and permanent footing. Even in the present state of relations between the two countries, and even after the correspondence that had taken place, and to which their Lordships could not shut their eyes when the correspondence that arose out of these circumstances was placed before them, he was not prepared to say that out of that correspondence there was any impediment to the renewal of a good understanding with the Government of France. With the feelings of respect and admiration which he entertained for the people of that country, he did hope that some opportunity would speedily arise to lay the foundation of an understanding with it, in which a greater degree of confidence might exist between the two countries. He felt bound to say so much in consequence of what had fallen from the noble Lord. He did not suppose that the noble Lord meant to cast censure on what had hitherto been done on this subject; and above all, when he deprecated carrying on the discussion on the matter in anything like a hostile spirit, which might have painful results. He was not aware that anything else was necessary for him then to observe, for when the occasion arose he should go more fully and minutely into the subject of Ireland than he then did, so that their Lordships and the public might be more fully informed as to what had already been done with respect to that portion of the empire, and also as to what was intended to be done. With the assurance of the noble Lord, that when these measures came to be submitted to Parliament, they should meet with no vexatious opposition, he was perfectly satisfied; and he felt assured that such proceeding must be attended with beneficial results. With regard to the progress of those measures which would be submitted to the Legislature, they would require the greatest co-operation and assistance of the whole of their Lordships, so as to enable the Government and the Parliament to effect those changes in society which the peculiar circumstances of the country demanded. Important as those interests were, and delicate as they were, do not let the noble Lord or the House suppose that it was proposed to deal lightly with that which was the great foundation on which all improvements must rest—the foundation of the rights of property, which he was sure all their Lordships must respect. It was not by the compromise of the rights of property that any salutary improvement could be effected in the country—it would be the first step to disimprovement: it would tend to aggravate the evils now existing, and to increase the extent of starvation now unhappily prevailing. The improvements called for nothing that could lead to any disregard of the rights of property. He therefore wished every measure that might be introduced on this subject to be tried by this test, which was the foundation of all social advantages. If any opposite measure should be brought forward, he trusted that it would be rejected. But this was a very different thing from taking steps for combining the interests of property with changes in the social system which are essential for the interests of the country. Their Lordships might give greater means to every Irish landed proprietor, so as to enable him to materially improve the condition of the tenantry, and thus great social changes might be effected without any injury to property, and the House would feel that by the adoption of the proper measures that they could not exalt the interests of one class without benefiting the other. In conclusion, he would take that opportunity of stating that on Monday next he should move for certain papers on this subject, and he would then state at greater length than he had done that night the proceedings of the Government, and their hopes and apprehensions for the future, not forgetting to provide for the present emergency by temporary measures, while they were taking steps for permanent improvements.

Lord BROUGHAM was sorry to say that, after a Parliamentary experience of thirty-seven years, he did not recollect the Legislature to have met, and the Crown to have addressed it, and the Government to have come forward, in circumstances of more grave embarrassment than at present; and it was only necessary to name Ireland in order to bid all personal altercations cease, and all party animosity to be hushed, and every voice to join in supporting measures of real benefit to that country. He should not make any professions of addressing their Lordships upon this occasion dispassionately and calmly, and with a view of avoiding all topics of an irritating kind, as perhaps those who had gone before him, notwithstanding similar professions, had not entirely steered clear of topics of this description. Wise, therefore, by the experience of the last three hours, he should abstain from such professions, and should throw himself upon the candour and justice of their Lordships, who would decide whether he had violated what he thought ought to be the rule. A person unconnected with party as he was, and only anxious for the welfare of the empire—and it would be much better for not being connected with party—might say certain things which it would be wholesome for the people to hear; and it was singly and simply with that view that he had presented himself to the House on that occasion. He wished to lay aside, in the first place, all the ordinary and usual topics which would impede his way to the main object at which he would arrive; namely, the deplorable—not to say disastrous—condition of the sister island. He was not quite satisfied that Parliament had not met earlier—not, God forbid! to bring the Irish Members over, they were better where they were—for, alas! at whatever time Parliament met, the absence of the Irish landlords would be just as necessary. The evil, he repeated, was just as great at one period as another; and in either case the evil of their absence must stand in the balance against the effects that might result from their wisdom in the Legislature. Let them remember what had occurred. The Labour-rate Act of last Session had failed. Where this was found to be the case, his noble Friend, Lord Besborough, had most properly and wisely exercised his discretion, on his responsibility, in making an order for changes in the mode of carrying out that Act. Then followed the letter of Mr. Labouchere to meet other difficulties, which, as well as that of Mr. Trevelyan, was not found sufficient to meet the difficulties of the case. Again, the Bill of last year, which involved the expenditure of a million on the encouragement of fisheries on the coast of Ireland, was inoperative; he, therefore, felt that there was some ground for saying that it was to be regretted that they did not meet at an earlier period. He would not say more on this subject at present, as he wished to get to the topics involved in the Speech. He wished that the ports had been opened; and in this he differed from his noble Friend near him as to the value of the scale. Under the old law, if prices went up to 70*s.* the duty would be only 1*s.* per quarter; but under the new Corn Law the duty was 4*s.* He wished that there should be no hesitation on the ground of the price of corn to see this last law suspended, if not altogether repealed. He agreed with an observation made last year by the noble Earl the Secretary for the Colonies (Earl Grey), that this was the inconsistent and bad part of the Bill; and that it would be better for the farmer, as well as the consumer, that the whole of the duties should have been taken off at once, rather than that the repeal should have been postponed until 1849. He totally agreed with the noble Marquess that, putting the case as strong as possible, and taking the strongest possible argument against the repeal, supposing all the 4*s.* duty went into the pockets of the importers of corn, and no part went to benefit the consumer—nay, that money was taken out of the public purse, and was offered as bounty for foreign corn—he was prepared to say that, in the present condition of Ireland, it would be money well bestowed; and he had no hesitation in expressing his hope that the restriction would be done away and the ports be opened. If Parliament had met, it might have saved that country from being exposed to ten weeks of the evil. He then came to another topic. Foreign affairs interested that House more than they did the other House; and they interested the other House much more than they did the country. He believed, as had been stated in a letter of a noble

Friend of his, that the people of this country were perfectly indifferent on the subject of Royal Marriages, with the exception of those immediately connected with our own Sovereign. He believed that other Royal Marriages were as perfectly and entirely a matter of indifference to the good people of England, Ireland, and Scotland, as they were to the inhabitants of the new planet discovered by M. Leverrier; except to those who read romances, or who had nothing else to do, or whose affairs were in such a prosperous state that they had time to attend to matters of mere indifference. He would make an allusion to a royal marriage which at the time led to most important consequences, and which would illustrate what he alluded to. When the Duke of Anjou, the grandson of Louis XIV., was placed on the throne of Spain under the title of Philip V., our great deliverer, King William, with that profound knowledge of foreign affairs which he possessed, and knowing the important consequences which might result from such a proceeding, wished to unite the people he was called upon to govern in a war against such succession. He at once took up the question of war, which was carried on by himself and successor, and led to the most illustrious campaigns which had ever been fought by this country, with the exception of those of his noble Friend, the illustrious Duke near him. Notwithstanding all the victories of Marlborough, the counsels of Godolphin, and the wisdom of Somers, the people of this country never could be induced to be satisfied with the war of the Spanish Succession. Although the interests of the country were most certainly involved in the Spanish Succession, yet the war became most unpopular, and the great victor was unable to stem the storm of the popular feeling of the country; and he was ultimately driven—to the infinite shame and disgrace of the people—from that country whose interests and glory he had so much advanced, if he had not absolutely saved. He asked, therefore, how was it possible for any Minister to fix public attention in the present day on what was called the Montpensier marriage? He deeply regretted the altered tone of the correspondence between the two countries. He did not agree with his noble Friend opposite, that his noble Friend near him differed from the foreign policy of the present Government, for the policy was the same of this as of the previous Government, as it must be of all Governments in this country, namely, to maintain by all possible means—that was, by all honourable means—to secure the maintenance of peaceful relations between our most illustrious and gracious Sovereign and the Sovereigns of other States, and, above all, with the neighbouring kingdom of France. He regretted that there should be even a momentary suspension of those most friendly feelings which existed between the Sovereigns of the two nations. He did not wish to say anything respecting the *entente cordiale* personally existing between the two Sovereigns, yet how pleasant it was to observe such conduct. But as far as the substantial interests of the two countries were concerned, they would be maintained by other means than royal conferences and royal visits; and, above all, when there were popular Governments in the two countries, peace was to be secured on grounds on which the interests of countries depended, and not by alliances, by marriages, or by visits of sovereigns, or by embassies from sovereigns. Those who understood these things were far from deeming the *entente cordiale* unimportant. On the contrary, it was of great importance to the people of the two countries; it ought to be ever cherished and encouraged, and when broken was deeply to be lamented, because it formed the precious oil which regulated the friction of the machine. When two nations had interests coming in contact on a thousand points all over the globe, and when any point of contact might, peradventure, become a point of friction and collision, then the *entente cordiale* was of great value as the precious means for alleviating the friction, and preventing a collision from taking place. Therefore it was that he regretted the occurrence of anything which should have tended to interrupt the good understanding between this country and France; and he heartily hoped that any such interruption would be but short, being thoroughly convinced that the deep, and consistent, and habitual desire, and strongly formed wish, on either side of the water, was that such interruption should cease. Being thoroughly persuaded, of his own personal knowledge, of the great desire, the earnest wish, that the best possible understanding should once more be established in form as well as in substance; (for, indeed, it never had been broken in substance at all; it was only the tone—certain expressions in the correspondence which had taken place—that was to be complained of;) being thoroughly persuaded of this, his hope and trust was, that nothing would be done to prevent a happy consummation taking place. And what did he think would most tend to prevent this happy conclusion being arrived at? Why, debates either in that House or in the House of Commons. He hoped and trusted, therefore, that of debates they would have none at present. Hoping that they should hear no more on this question—that temperate and courteous language alone would be employed where language was necessary—he seriously trusted that the papers which they were promised would not have the effect of leading them into further debate; and with these remarks he would leave this question, and proceed to say a word or two on the subject of Cracow. He regretted that, on this question, his noble Friend the Mover of the Address should have made use of the language he had employed. He expressed his abhorrence of what had taken place, and spoke of it as an atrocious crime. Now, he (Lord Brougham) thought this dangerous language, unless they meant to go further. [Lord HATHERTON: The expression was used by M. Duchâtel, the French Minister.] Then he said very wrong. This happened to be the subject, of all others, on which the public mind was most excited and exasperated, in consequence of its bearings upon the fate of Poland; and he thought it was not right to use such strong expressions when they were not prepared to go further. To say to a foreign State, "You have committed a crime which we abhor; your conduct is an infraction of a treaty which you were bound to keep sacred,"—was language that ought not to be employed unless they were prepared to follow it up with important consequences. A Government, however, was not only at liberty, but, on certain occasions, was bound to enter a protest against the conduct of other States; and he thought that on the present occasion the Speech from the Throne did enter a protest, strongly indeed expressed, but not indecently strong — not dangerously strong — not a protest which either Russia, or Austria, or Prussia, had a right to complain of. He felt strongly on the conduct of those parties, and considered that their conduct was not by any means justified by the defence they had set up for it. He considered that the attempt at a defence amounted to no more than this—that the conduct of Cracow, and the danger of its vicinity, gave the three Powers, and especially Austria, a perfectly undeniable right to call upon the guarantees of the Treaty of 1814-15 to release them from their obligations. Now, he did not grant them this right. He objected to their taking the law into their own hands. The guarantees, England and France, were parties as well as the three Northern Powers; and he should like to know what Russia, Austria, and Prussia, would answer if the French were to say there was now an end of the Treaty of Vienna: for, observe, the Treaty of Vienna was made to control France; and that country might say, since they had done away with a part of the treaty—since they were loose, France had a right to be loose too. He agreed, therefore, with the words used in the Speech and the Address; but he would avoid using harsh recrimination, and language that was not absolutely necessary. Our intercourse with Austria—our ancient alliance with that Power, was of the greatest importance to this country; and, whether we were on the best possible terms with France, or whether anything should occur to interrupt the good understanding with that country, next to it it was of the greatest importance to be on a good understanding with Austria; and this had ever been the policy of the wisest and greatest statesmen which this country had seen. Prussia was of much less importance to us than Austria was. With the exception of the course taken by Pitt, in 1787, when he formed an alliance with Prussia to drive the French out of Holland, and that former occasion when our policy knit us closely with Frederick II., who was regarded by the people of England as the greatest Protestant hero of his times—but who might as reasonably be called so as Payne—with these two exceptions there had been no great national interests existing between this country and Prussia. With reference to this question of Cracow, he blamed Prussia more than he did Austria. She had nothing to complain of; but because Austria chose to put down Cracow as a republican institution, she chose to join in the act. If Prussia had stood out, as she ought on this occasion, she would have come forth covered with glory, and obtained respect and alliance all over the world. It was, indeed, a great mistake which Prussia had committed; and, having the greatest respect for the Monarch of that country, and for his Ministers—having the greatest respect for the learning of the one, and the liberal principles and good faith of the other, who, he believed, was about to give liberal institutions to his people, it was with the deepest regret he found that they had not opposed, as was their true policy, the aggressions of Austria and the infraction of the treaty. To turn a little to the other topics of the Speech from the Throne, he trusted that any measure which Her Majesty's Ministers intended to introduce for the relief of Ireland, would be timeously and fully submitted to their Lordships, and that they would not be called upon to go through the farce of giving their assent to a Money Bill, which it was sure to be, and which they would not be permitted to touch. It might be said that they could throw out any Bill of which they did not approve, and get the House of Commons to pass another; but this they could not do at a crisis like the present. The Bill must pass. It meant money, and nothing else; it must be a Money Bill, and therefore they could not touch it. Let them now only observe what they would be called upon to do. It would be said to them, "You can send it back, and let them bring in another Bill, if you do not like this." But he (Lord Brougham) would ask them, could they do that? Could they do it, above all things, at this time? Could they do it at the crisis in which they were now called upon to act? Could they debate and say whether they would or would not agree upon this measure? Could they have the nerve to face the country, and reject this measure which the Commons had passed? If it were a Bill that they were all against except those noble Lords who were Members of the Government that brought it in—if they all objected to it, yet none of them dared, in the present circumstances of the country, to object to that Bill, because it was a measure for the relief of starving thousands. They were not now, he might say, to debate at all upon what the course of legislation was to be in respect to Ireland; that was, perhaps, the last time they would have an opportunity of speaking on the subject, for although his noble Friend opposite (the Marquess of Lansdowne) had said that on Monday night he would lay certain papers before the House that would raise some question, let it be recollected, that it would raise no question for decision. He (Lord Brougham) would recommend the Government, in reference to the circumstances now stated, in fairness towards the House and the country, and in fairness to themselves, that they might profit by the suggestions of that House; that the measure might be modified according to the wisdom of that House, as well as of the other; he would, he repeated, strongly recommend the Government to proceed by way of Resolution. It was difficult to speak of what was to happen—much more what would happen in certain cases if the course which now seemed resolved to be taken were pursued; but if by Resolution, instead of by Bill, they were called upon to give their assistance on this great national question, he ventured to say that this Resolution would not be debated there without a considerable alteration being suggested. It must then come on as a Money Bill in the other House; and he (Lord Brougham) conceived, that except the other House of Parliament had gone privilege-mad, and would not allow them to debate on the subject, except they thought they were not only the collective wisdom of the nation, but desired to exclude all others, and professed to have not alone a collection of wisdom, but a monopoly of it, they themselves should be the first to thank them for throwing on the subject the light of their deliberation, that House being eminently a deliberative body, because they had so much the less to do with other things and other measures. The next suggestion he would throw out was, that a line should be drawn and carefully adhered to during the present Session between temporary measures of momentary expediency to meet the obvious evils now felt, and that those be kept entirely apart from any permanent measures introducing organic, or radical, or permanent changes into the policy of the country in regard to Ireland. He held it to be impossible that when the cry of hunger prevailed over the land—when there was the melancholy substance as well as the cry—when the country was distracted from day to day by accounts of the most heartrending spectacles he had ever seen, heard, or read of—that at a time when there was deep misery and distress prevailing and pervading in Ireland, rendered only the more heartrending because the more touching, by the patience, the admirable and almost inimitable patience, with which it seemed to be borne—that at a time when this grievous calamity existed — when there were scenes enacting all over those unfortunate districts which they could find nothing exceeding in the page of disease, and death, and pestilence, ever following in the train of famine

—to which nothing exceeding was to be found on the page of Josephus, or on the canvas of Poussin, or in the dismal chant of Dante—that at this very time, and under the pressure arising from these sights, from which, with an instinctive horror, they averted their eye, but which they were compelled by a more reasonable humanity to make an effort to relieve—while they were labouring under such feelings, and those feelings partaken of by millions in both countries—while there was all over Ireland and England an agitation deeply rooted in men's minds, and pervading all ranks of the people on this subject—that they should be in circumstances like these, and yet be able calmly and deliberately to take up questions of a permanent policy, he held to be absolutely and necessarily impossible. Then, if they drew a line of distinction between the two classes of measures, they must be careful that none of the temporary measures to be adopted should, with the name of being only temporary, with the aspect of only being to provide for the passing mischief, be such as would affect the constitution, or change the institutions of the country. They should take special care not to do anything that it would not be easy to undo again. They might purchase even temporary measures too dearly. In 1797, Pitt brought in his celebrated measure with reference to cash payments. It was only to last six months, as it was said to be for a temporary exigency; but it lasted twenty-three years, and then the repeal was as mischievous as the measure itself — so much so, that at the distance of half a century we were suffering from the mischievous effects of that temporary measure. Therefore let them see that when they supplied persons with money and with powers respecting their property, and when they formed depôts, and interfered with trade, let them take care that they did not make it far more difficult with those persons to come back to the natural state of things in another year. He wished they could flatter themselves that they should only for six or eight months have a continuance of the frightful scenes that were now going on, and the misery that was now endured by their fellow-countrymen; but he was much afraid that the next year's crop was not secured yet in the ground, or anything like it. He had heard something about the sowing of oats in the beginning of February, but it must be clear that the country in which this could be done was very different from any part of the world he was acquainted with. This labour rate had taken away labourers from the cultivation of the land; and why were they taken away? Because, when they employed a labourer, they took care that he worked for his wages; but when he went to work upon the roads, he was sorry to say, from what he had heard, that he did not work. He understood that a great number of those labourers had come over to this country. He could name a seaport town to which 13,000 and some odd hundreds had come over in a few days. A correspondent, who had communicated with him on this subject, could not say what had become of 9,000 of them. He supposed some went to this town and some to that town, but (said his correspondent) "to our town came 4,000 on the last board-day in addition to our ordinary poor." It appeared that on those persons being searched, from 1*s.* to 5*s.* were found with them; and he (Lord Brougham) knew that labourers in this country were not accustomed to have 5*s.* in their pockets—not paupers, but daily labourers. That was the way in which everything was dislocated in this unnatural state of things. And did not all this prove an additional consideration in favour of not rashly legislating, except so far as was absolutely and indispensably necessary for the purpose of meeting the pressure of the existing state of things? With respect to absenteeism, he (Lord Brougham) differed widely from his noble Friend the Mover of the Address. He (Lord Brougham) knew of no properties that he had heard of in Ireland which were better administered than those of absentees. Generally speaking, an absentee landlord took especial care to have very able and trustworthy and good agents; those agents reside on the spot, and act as if they were the owners; they fulfil in a great degree the duty of the absent owners, and which the absent owner would fulfil if he were present. He (Lord Brougham) would certainly wish that the owners themselves resided on their estates in Ireland, though it would prevent him from seeing a number of noble Friends of his that he now saw in that place; but they could not alter the habits of men, and if they had property in Ireland, but greater property in England, they were not to make themselves absentees from England; they were not to expose themselves to the charge of being absentees from England, and they could not live in two places at the same time. They must live in one place or in the other, and he (Lord Brougham) was not disposed to blame them for not living in Ireland merely because they had property in Ireland.

Lord HATHERTON explained that a great number of the absentees to whom he had referred were small owners, who lived in various countries abroad.

Lord BROUGHAM continued: Another proposition had been put forward, to which he could not assent, namely, that because there was a scarcity and misery in their country, the Irish people had a right to come upon the imperial revenue to support them. He held that doctrine to be most dangerous—he held it to be infinitely more dangerous than the worst abuses to which the worst part of their own poor laws ever were exposed—it would be perfectly ruinous to everything like prudent forethought and economy—he held it to be an encouragement to improvidence, thoughtlessness, recklessness, extravagance; but above all, it would be particularly mischievous with a people like the Irish, who, though they had numberless virtues, were too sanguine in their hopes when encouraged, and too confident in their own delusions when once deluded; and if it were once held out to them that they were to be supplied with an indefinite amount of eleemosynary support, he did not hesitate to say that they would easily lapse into habits of indolence. Their Lordships were not to judge of the Irish labourers by what they saw of them in this country. The Irish labourer worked here as hard as any man; they could not get in their harvest without him; he lived on little or nothing; he was a quiet inoffensive person. In the districts to which they gave the benefit of their assistance, no outrages took place; there was no robbery; there were no thefts on the farmhouse; not a chicken from the farmhouse was stolen—a better class of persons never did he see than those Irish labourers who came over to "shear," as it was called, in England. They worked very hard at that sort of work for which their strength qualified them; but he (Lord Brougham) was afraid that was not the character of the Irish labourer in his own country. He knew the Irish labourer was very apt to live upon little; in fact, he was satisfied with that which would be sufficient to sustain himself and his family; but he did as little work as he possibly could; therefore, he (Lord Brougham) was most anxious to have it understood that they should not, in the temporary relief which they afforded to the Irish peasant, hold out the prospect that his wants were to be supplied in future by the treasury of the empire. They might make advances if they would, by way of loan, under due regulations, to see it was properly bestowed and usefully employed, insisting, however, the interest should be paid, and the principal be repaid by the parties locally interested in the expenditure of the money, by those whose lands were to profit by that loan. But to advance money without the prospect of repayment, would shake the strongest Government that England had seen for very many years. No Government that pursued such a policy could stand against the force of public opinion—not that the people of England were cold or indifferent to the sufferings of their fellow-subjects in Ireland—the large subscriptions entered into in this country negatived any such hypothesis; but they would not allow sums to be paid over to the Irish which were to be reckoned by hundreds of thousands, nay, by millions, unless there were to be a repayment of the whole amount—principal and interest. Let the idea once get abroad that there was to be any grant of the sort—let it once be advertised that two or three millions of money were to be spent in Ireland, and given away to the Irish, and immediately there would be an amount of abuse, and jobbing, and fraud, of which history could afford no parallel. Nothing could be worse for Ireland herself than that, as nothing could be worse for the whole empire, than that the whole empire should contribute to the removal of a temporary misfortune which no human agency had brought upon Ireland. His noble Friend who moved the Address had requested the people of England to make the case their own, and asked if the people of Lancashire would not call upon the empire to support them if their cotton happened to be destroyed by a grub; but then, if the Irish were thus called upon to support their English fellow-subjects, there would, indeed, be a strenuous cry for repeal. Even now Archbishop M'Hale said, that the people of this country owed the Irish millions of money. The archbishop told his confiding countrymen, that since the Union, the English people carried away from them vast quantities of beef, pork, and grain. Now, his late right hon. Friend, Sir John Newport, sought for and obtained, as a favour. the right for the Irish of free export to England; and Dr. M'Hale described this free export as a taking away of all their provisions; but the most rev. Doctor seemed to forget that all those provisions had been paid for. Every sack of wheat, every sack of flour, every sack of oats, every stone of pork and beef, were all paid for by English money; but that was totally forgotten, and it was said they owed the Irish all this. One great authority there said they were bound to pay forty millions for Ireland; another said, not merely forty millions, but sixty millions, for that sixty millions was what the English had got from them all this while. Really it was vain to talk of reasoning with persons who spoke in this kind of way. It was their duty not to subscribe to the delusion. It should be not merely their opinion, but their fixed and determined resolution, that the money which was advanced, should, generally speaking (that was, except in same few cases), be paid back principal and interest. That was the only security for justice being done to the people of England, and the only security of good being done by the advance to the people of Ireland themselves. Let it not be supposed that he joined in one word that had been said against the Irish landlords. The improvement which had come upon that most respectable and improving race of their fellow-subjects during the last twenty or thirty years baffled any description he could give of it; and their present exertions (with very few exceptions), and their charity and kindness, exceeded all praise that he could give them. If he (Lord Brougham) were asked whether any great good could accrue from the subscriptions which had been made either in Dublin, or in Cork, or elsewhere, he freely confessed there was hardly one. They would be chiefly valuable as an indication of good feeling between the people of the two countries; in that point of view, they were valuable, and therefore it was that he had read with incredulity a report in one of the Irish journals, in which it was stated that the English were subscribing money for the purpose of seducing the starving Catholics from their faith, and getting them to become Protestants. Never was there anything so false or foul as that aspersion, and it was so incredible and monstrous that he (Lord Brougham) must say he could not believe it was ever said. He had seen attempts at saying it—he had seen insinuations—but anything so monstrous as that false assertion in its naked atrocity he had never seen, and therefore he did not believe it was said. That, no doubt, would put a stop to the contributions, and let them do substantial good or not, they indicated good feeling on the part of the people; it was calculated to keep up a good feeling between the people of the two countries, which he regretted to say was thus attempted to be poisoned at its source. He had applied in more instances than one to persons to co-operate with him in promoting the relief of the suffering Irish; but then he was told that as long as these facts existed, and they were facts, he could not expect the co-operation of his friends. He was told that the repeal rent continued to be paid, and that the sums deposited in savings' banks were greater, and the sums drawn out of them less, than in former years; and that, under such circumstances, he could not expect that his friends would assist his views and co-operate with him. Who were the parties that paid the rent and made deposits in the savings' bank? Not those, surely, who were starving. The state of the savings' banks, and of the repeal fund, merely showed it was the wealthy classes who so applied their money; and that the really poor had nothing to do with them. That there happened to be a few people in Ireland who had money to spare, formed no reason why kind and Christian feelings should cease to influence men's minds. He did not see that in every case it would be right to refuse the Irish pecuniary aid, though he believed that nothing could be mere dangerous than that an extensive system of relief should be gratuitously supplied; a large plan would be a most dangerous experiment; there would be no harm in a suspension of the corn laws, or of the navigation laws; but he protested against any large plan of eleemosynary relief. He wished to say one word about the money market. Within a short time, no less than 6,000,000*l.* had been paid here, and the merchants of this country had recently been obliged to send gold and silver into foreign countries in payment for foreign goods. This greatly embarrassed the English money market; but it was the necessary consequence of the present unwholesome state of trade in foreign countries. The fact was that, at the present moment, we wanted to get corn from foreign countries, and neither we nor the French had manufactures to send out wherewith to pay for the corn, and we were, therefore, obliged to import it at a great loss. In making our payments to foreign countries, we were obliged to pay large sums in gold and silver—an evil which was mainly attributable to an unwholesome state of trade, and to an infatuated commercial policy on our parts. It was, in fact, the natural and inevitable consequence of that exclusive system by which we were heretofore led astray, and which, preventing the free intercourse of commodities between this and other countries, of course prevented the manufacturers at home from shaping their supply to a foreign demand. It was in the highest degree essential that the commercial interests of a great country should be regulated with a due regard to the principles of sound political economy; but he would venture to assure their Lordships now, as he had done when introducing the first great free-trade measure, that any policy of trade founded on an exclusive or monopolising system was not only a sin against the principles of political economy, but also a gross outrage on common sense and common justice. These general remarks on the state of Ireland, and the description of legislation which she required, he had felt himself called upon to submit to their Lordships; but he trusted it would not be considered that in the course of his remarks he had manifested any disposition either to undervalue the exertions made for the relief of Ireland, or to underrate the amount of misery which actually existed in that afflicted land. He admitted both these facts most unreservedly, and participated in those feelings of compassion and sympathy which could not but be experienced by every man who had a heart within his bosom. He had touched on a few of what appeared to him to be those particular errors of the day, which it was necessary, if possible, to put down by wholesome legislation. Amongst the objects which were desirable at the present moment, might be mentioned a judicious and well-devised reform in some of the laws respecting property. He was of opinion that increased facilities ought to be given for the easy and expeditious conveyance of land; but this was a question which ought to be handled with delicacy and caution, so that the rights of property might not be in any degree impaired. He could not agree with the noble Lord who had moved the Address, in the opinion that any alteration in the laws affecting property ought to be at all sanctioned which would have the effect of throwing aside the learning of the old lawyers by putting an end to appeals.

LORD **HATHERTON** explained that he had never intended to advocate anything of the kind. He had done nothing more than express an opinion that parties on whose properties Government had charges, ought to be at liberty to sell their properties in order to pay off those incumbrances.

LORD **BROUGHAM** was happy that this opportunity of explanation had been afforded to his noble Friend; but even the reform to which he now expressed himself favourable was one which ought to be handled with extreme caution and delicacy, lest the interests of those having contingent rights in property should suffer any injury; for it should be borne in mind that the right of the remainder in tail was quite as valid, and to himself quite as important, as that of the actual occupier. Any alterations, therefore, in the law of conveyance should be introduced with a view to relieving the estate for the permanent benefit not only of the actual possessor, but also of the heir. In conclusion, he had only to apologize for trespassing at such length on their Lordships' attention, and to express a hope that it would not be considered that, in the course of the observations he had felt himself called upon to offer, he had entered upon any offensive or invidious topics. Most assuredly he had not intended to have done so, and if he had, he regretted it most unaffectedly.

EARL **FITZWILLIAM** felt great satisfaction at what had passed in their Lordships' House that evening, and hoped that the tone of what was passing in the other House would be found to correspond with that of their Lordships' proceedings. Having had frequent opportunity of personal observation, he discovered that there was in England a vast deal of incredulity about the distress in Ireland, which he trusted would be removed by the remarks which had fallen from several noble Lords in the course of the present debate, but more particularly in the course of the moving and touching speech of his noble Friend who had seconded the Address. Notwithstanding the low tone in which that speech had been delivered, he hoped that every word of it would find its way out of doors, and sink deeply into the minds and hearts of the people of England, for if they had not felt as much alive on this subject as he (Lord Fitzwilliam) felt, it was not because they had less sympathy for the distress in Ireland, but because there was unfortunately on this side of the water a disposition to incredulity as regarded everything that happened upon the other side. He agreed with the noble and learned Lord opposite (Lord Brougham) in the opinion that there had not begun a Session of Parliament in the remembrance of those who sat in it now, under circumstances more awful than those which now presented themselves to their consideration. Parliament had now indeed to deal with matters worth thinking about—matters well worth deliberating about—matters which were well deserving of the attention of every man who, possessing powers of thought, was anxious to devote his energies to the task of considering what might be best for his country. It was no common question they had to solve. Depend upon it it was not by any small or half measures that they must think of grappling with this great question. With respect to the measures which were proposed to be introduced by Her Majesty's Government, as far as he could judge of them from the allusions in the Queen's Speech, and from the observations which had been made by the noble Marquess (the Marquess of Lansdowne), he need only to say that he approved of them as far as they went; but whether they went to the full extent and were up to the full measure of the great calamity they were designed to mitigate, and whether they would solve the great problem that was to be solved, were questions on which he ventured to entertain some doubt. Whoever wished to arrive at a sound decision on the subject must consider what was the great phenomenon which Ireland presented to their consideration. That phenomenon was its dense rural population. The aggregate population was eight millions, and it was perhaps no exaggeration to say that seven-eighths of them were a rural population. It was clear to every man who had devoted any attention to the subject, that one half this population would cultivate the land better than it was now cultivated. Even at the risk of giving offence to the noble Marquess who sat below him (the Marquess of Westmeath), he could not refrain expressing it as his opinion that except in the case of some few instances agriculture could scarcely be said to exist in Ireland. In England agriculture was carried on as a trade, but this was not the case in Ireland. In Ireland, generally (though certainly not universally) speaking, the farmer and cottier tenant did not sit down to their holding for the purpose of carrying on a trade there, but simply to obtain the means of existence for themselves and their families; and when this object was accomplished, the remainder of their earnings, if any remainder there were, might go as rent to the landlord, or for the discharge of any other demand. The great task, therefore, which devolved upon the Legislature was to entirely change the condition of rural Ireland. For rural Ireland, as long as it continued cultivated and peopled as at present, they could never legislate as they would legislate for rural England. They might be deceived by words; but to legislate alike for both countries, because the same words might be used in reference to both, and because the same denominations might be employed in respect of things which were not alike, was to be guilty of the grossest inconsistency; and yet this error was one into which, from identity of terms, they occasionally fell. It was sometimes consistent to legislate for both countries differently, and sometimes the extreme of inconsistency to legislate alike. They had heard of the introduction of a poor law into Ireland; but with great respect for those whose feelings might lead them to think that a poor law ought to be brought in for Ireland, such as existed in England, he would venture to express his decided opinion that as long as rural Ireland continued such as it now was, an extension of the present English poor law to that country would be fraught with the most mischievous consequences. This had been the opinion of the most experienced men who had been sent to Ireland for the purpose of examining and reporting on its condition. He thought they had come to a sound conclusion; and if Parliament were ever to be driven by English feeling and English opinion into the introduction into Ireland of a poor law similar to that which now existed in England, he was sure that they would be inflicting on Ireland one of the greatest possible calamities. He respected the people of England, of whom he was one; but he must say fairly that he never yet met with a pure Englishman who had any conception of the true state of society in Ireland, and he therefore ventured very much to doubt whether they were very well qualified to form an opinion on the description of legislation that was adapted for that country. Entirely agreeing with his noble Friend that it was necessary that the maxims of political economy should be attended to, he, nevertheless, also fully concurred in the opinion that there might have been cases where it might have been well for Government to have established depôts. He thought they ought to be most rare, and that they could only be justified in special circumstances. And he likewise agreed with his noble Friend in the opinion, that it would not be at all wise in the Government to make in these countries the necessary purchases for stocking the depôts. But he did not see the same objection to purchasing abroad, and storing the depôts with foreign corn. The project, however, was one which should be taken up with great caution, and on the whole the Government had, perhaps, acted wisely in not undertaking it. It would be very difficult to deal properly with the case of Ireland until they drained largely from the rural population. This could only be done by Government, and he was inclined to think that the sooner they set about it the better. It was a strange fact, and one that did not redound to the honour of England, that while the rural population of Ireland had grown to seven millions, the town population had been diminishing in the same period. This fact should be borne in mind in all their legislation, for their object should be to increase and favour the town population, and to draw the inhabitants of the country as much as possible into towns and villages. The rural population of Ireland was not collected together in villages and hamlets as in this country; but every encouragement to concentrate the population as much as possible in that manner should be held out. It had been observed by the noble Lord opposite, that an Archbishop at the other side of the water had made some absurdly erroneous statements as to the debt due by England to Ireland—

Lord BROUGHAM begged to explain. The debt with which the Archbishop contended that this country was chargeable was not one of money, but simply of ingratitude. He complained that for a long series of years Ireland had been feeding the people of England with pork, pickled beef, and other matters of that kind. It was just such a debt as the noble Lord very possibly owed to his butcher, and if he had not yet paid, he would owe him more.

Earl FITZWILLIAM was not quite certain, after all, that even in a pecuniary point of view England did not owe many debts to Ireland. It was not a century ago that it was looked upon as a very great boon on the part of England that she permitted pork and such other provisions to be brought into her ports from Ireland, and then only in a temporary manner. This circumstance should not be lost sight of; nor should the fact be overlooked that it was not until the time of his lamented Friend, Sir J. Newport, that full and free trade was established between the two countries. In the time of Charles, Irish black cattle were generally kept away from the shores of England, and their occasional presence here was complained of as a nuisance. Again, he had to express his conviction that even in a pecuniary point of view there were debts due by this country to Ireland. With respect to the measures which it was in the contemplation of Her Majesty's Government to propose, he had only to express an anxious hope that they would be of a large and comprehensive nature, capable of meeting the great difficulties which the Legislature had to struggle with.

The Marquess of WESTMEATH said, that although the system of agriculture in Ireland was good in theory, it was greatly deficient in practice. With respect to the works that were going on, he thought the landlords ought personally to superintend them, so that the soil should not be thrown out of cultivation; and he earnestly trusted that the Government would pause and consider well before they stated what remedial measures they should propose. For the sympathy shown by the people of this country for the distress in Ireland he felt most grateful, and hoped that proper supervision would be adopted to prevent any abuse in the application of the funds contributed for the relief of that country.

The Earl of RODEN observed, that the notice which the noble Marquess opposite had given of his intention to bring the case of Ireland at an early day under their Lordships' consideration, would deter him from entering at any length on the discussion of the subject. He could not however, refrain from expressing his gratification at the interest which the unhappy position of that country had excited amongst their Lordships. He was glad that the matter had been taken up so warmly; for had there not been an earnest debate, it would have been said that they had exhibited a want of feeling on occasion of one of the greatest calamities that had ever afflicted any country. Having been an eye-witness to many of the dreadful scenes which had recently occurred in

Ireland, he was in a position to corroborate the representations which had been made by the noble Marquess opposite (Marquess of Lansdowne), and the noble Lord by whom the Address had been seconded. He could enter fully into their feelings of compassion and sympathy, for when in Ireland he had been compelled to look on a state of suffering such as had never existed in any country of which he had ever heard. In the course of a single week the whole food of the country had been destroyed, for the great masses of the people lived almost exclusively on the potato, and the consequent misery was indescribable. This the people of England felt most acutely; and he was sure the people of Ireland were most grateful for their sympathy. Ireland had experienced in this sad emergency the greatest benefit from having at the head of the Executive, as Lord Lieutenant, a nobleman who was himself an Irishman; and he should be ungrateful to that distinguished personage were he not to admit that he had left no means untried in order to meet the calamity which he evidently foresaw would be most disastrous. He conceived the proposal for a loan for the improvements of estates would be of the greatest benefit; but as that, together with many other subjects of great importance, must necessarily come under consideration, he would defer any observations he had to make, and he should be most happy to render to the Government any assistance which his experience in Irish affairs might enable him to offer. He bore his testimony to the excellent conduct of the Irish resident landlords in the present emergency. Foul calumnies and aspersions had been cast upon that body of men; but he for one should be always ready—as he was able from local knowledge and experience—to refute them. To that body of men he would say, "Persevere in the course you are now pursuing; for remember, that by well-doing you will be enabled to dissipate the prejudices and silence the clamours that have been raised against you."

The EARL of HARDWICKE expressed his conviction that there would be a general concurrence of all sides of the House that anything which could be done for the relief of the people of Ireland should be done speedily, practically, and perfectly. It appeared to him that the great object to which the Government ought to turn their attention was the conveyance of food to Ireland. Her Majesty's ships were in active operation for that purpose. It was proved that there was a quantity of food that might immediately be supplied if a conveyance could be found. It appeared that at Liverpool, only a few days ago, there were ready for shipping 62,403 quarters of wheat, 142,000 quarters of wheaten flour; making in all 204,403 quarters, or sufficient to feed 2,500,000 for one month. In London there were 36,372 quarters of oats, 11,683 quarters of peas, 47,003 quarters of wheat, and of wheat flour 80,000 quarters; making in all, 175,257 quarters — sufficient to feed 1,800,000 persons for one month; and at Glasgow there were, of wheat 150,738 quarters; of oats 13,439 quarters; and of peas 14,089 quarters; making 178,276 quarters of corn of various kinds: and of wheaten flour there were 67,500 quarters, or, in all, 245,276 quarters — sufficient to feed 2,500,000 persons for one month. So that, in those three ports, there were 624,936 quarters, or sufficient to feed 6,300,000 persons one month, or 2,100,000 persons three months. There were, he believed, 11 ships of the line at home, and he should like to know from the noble Earl (the Earl of Auckland) whether they could not be employed in conveying corn from one port to another in this country?

The EARL of AUCKLAND, in answer to the noble Earl's question, said, that the subject had occupied the earnest attention of the Government, with the view of bringing corn from foreign countries; but after the best inquiries, and the deepest consideration of the subject and the interests of commerce, they had found that the shipping employed by private enterprise would be amply sufficient to bring from America all the corn at New York and Boston before the setting in of the frost; and that the employment of the Government ships would so interfere with private trade as to be likely to displace a larger proportion of tonnage than the Government were able themselves to supply. With regard to what the Admiralty had done at home, they had omitted no exertion in supplying ships to carry corn from one port in the country to another at every requisition; there had been from 30 to 40 steamers so employed, and 14 or 15 sailing vessels, and there had not been a single requisition made to the Government with which they had not been able ultimately to comply. He believed that this support of Her Majesty's Ministers had been felt by the authorities in Ireland to have been most important, and the Government were quite prepared to carry it through.

LORD STANLEY wished to ask a question concerning the course the Government intended to pursue on Monday. As he had understood, the noble Marquess proposed to move for and lay upon the Table certain papers connected with Ireland, and then to state the measures which were in contemplation by the Government. He (Lord Stanley) had not, however, collected from the noble Marquess whether he proposed on that or on another occasion to take in any way the sense or opinion of the House upon those measures. At all events, he would venture to suggest that nothing could be more inconvenient, or less likely to lead to a satisfactory result, than a discussion upon matters of great importance immediately on the announcement of those measures, and before there had been time for deliberation upon them. He wished therefore to understand whether the Government contemplated that any discussion should take place on Monday, or, which he should think the more convenient course, the noble Marquess should move for and lay his papers on the Table, and that on that occasion their Lordships should not attempt to enter upon a discussion which could lead to no satisfactory result. He wished to know if the Government desired to anticipate the Resolution of the House of Commons, or thought with him it would be better to adjourn the discussion from Monday to some day not very distant, but sufficiently so to give time for consideration, and that on Monday their Lordships should abstain from expressing any opinion whatsoever.

The MARQUESS of LANSDOWNE said, it was very desirable that the course of proceeding should be clearly understood, but at the same time he could scarcely add anything to what he had already stated, that on Monday he should move for some ordinary papers for the purpose of stating what were the intentions of Her Majesty's Government. That was the only course he could take, because the Resolution must originate in the other House; but at the same time he had thought it convenient their Lordships should be put in possession of a general view of the measure contemplated by the Government, but without asking them to discuss the question, or pronounce any opinion whatever upon the plan. Any noble Lord would be of course at liberty, if he thought proper, to originate a substantive Motion upon the subject.

The Motion for an humble Address was then agreed to, *nemine dissentiente;* and a Committee was appointed to prepare the Address, and, after some time, Report was made of an Address drawn up by them, which, being read, was agreed to, and ordered to be presented to Her Majesty by the Lords with white staves.

House adjourned.

HOUSE OF COMMONS,

Tuesday, January 19, 1847.

MINUTES.] NEW WRITS (*during Recess*).—For Renfrewshire, *v.* Patrick Maxwell Stewart, Esq., deceased.—For Lincoln County (Parts of Lindsey), *v.* Lord Worsley, now Earl of Yarborough.—For Worcester County, Eastern Division, *v.* John Barneby, Esq., deceased.

Now Ordered.—For Salisbury, *v.* Ambrose Hussey, Esq., Chiltern Hundreds.—For Sussex, Western Division, *v.* Charles Wyndham, Esq., Chiltern Hundreds.

NEW MEMBERS SWORN.—For Lincoln County (Parts of Lindsey), Sir Montague John Cholmeley, Bart.—For Renfrewshire, William Mure, Esq.—For Derby Borough, Edward Strutt, Esq.—For Worcester County (Eastern Division), George Rushout, Esq.

PUBLIC BILLS. 1° Outlawries.

THE House met at Two o'clock, and attended Her Majesty in obedience to Message. On the return of the House, it was adjourned for business till Four o'clock. On the reassembling of the House, Mr. SPEAKER acquainted the House that he had issued Warrants for *New Writs* during the Recess. (See *Minutes.*)

SIKH PRISONERS.

MR. WARBURTON wished to be informed whether any inquiry had been instituted into the rumours formerly spread of the murder of the Sikh prisoners after the battles of the Sutlej; and, if so, what had been the result of the inquiry?

MR. FOX MAULE begged to be allowed to state, that immediately after the attention of Government had been drawn to the subject he had directed letters to be written to the Commander-in-Chief of the army in India communicating the rumour referred to, and requesting him to make the most minute inquiry. The House would perhaps recollect that he had on a former occasion stated his strong belief that it was impossible that such a rumour should be well founded. That belief had since been fully confirmed, for letters had been received from Lord Gough, stating that he had directed a court of inquiry to be assembled in the regiment, and that before that court was called the individual said to have written the letter containing the information. He had stated that he had written a letter mentioning that one Sikh had been put to death summarily, by Lord Gough, for springing a mine upon the British troops after the battle, when they were entering a village. There was, however, no foundation whatever for the report, that the prisoners taken in the battles of the Sutlej had been wantonly murdered in cold blood. It was a foul calumny and a most unjust aspersion, and he was glad that the subject had been mentioned, and that an opportunity had been thus given to him of stating, in the face of the House and of the world at large, that the report was nothing but a foul calumny on the British army.

WORKHOUSES (IRELAND).

Mr. P. SCROPE, seeing the Secretary for the Home Department in his place, wished to learn whether it were the intention of Ministers to lay upon the Table any returns respecting the condition of union workhouses in Ireland? If they did not intend to do that of their own accord, he should be prepared to-morrow to move for such returns. He was anxious also to ask a question as to the truth of a statement he found imputed to the Earl of Mountcashel, at a meeting held at Fermoy on Thursday last. That statement was, that in the Fermoy workhouse, which was calculated for 400 paupers, there were no fewer than 1,500 paupers, and that in the sick ward from three to eight persons were crowded into one bed: in the week before last there had been thirty-four deaths, and in the last week forty-seven deaths. He would follow up the subject by inquiring whether any orders had been given to extend relief to the poor of that district, or others, without requiring them to enter a pestilential workhouse?

Sir G. GREY replied, that he should be happy immediately to lay before the House the whole correspondence respecting workhouses in Ireland.

ADDRESS IN ANSWER TO THE SPEECH.

Mr. SPEAKER having *reported* Her Majesty's Speech, and read it to the House;

Mr. C. HOWARD rose to move the Address, and spoke as follows:—Before I proceed I must claim, I fear, even a larger share of indulgence than the House is usually kind enough to bestow. I assure the House that in my present situation I stand greatly in need of it; but in the course of the few observations I shall offer, I hope that nothing will fall from me to disturb that unanimity I am sure it was intended Her Majesty's Speech should inspire. We shall, I think, do well if on this occasion at least we abstain from party disputes, and, like the late meeting in Dublin, unite for one common and beneficial purpose—the improvement of the condition of Ireland. The first paragraph of Her Majesty's Speech expresses deep regret at the unfortunate dearth in the north of Scotland and in Ireland; and I am sure the House will sympathize in that regret. The circumstances of the latter country appear to be of an appalling character, and beset with such difficulty and danger that we shrink from the contemplation of them. Were not honourable Members so familiar with the painful details, I should hardly have known how to advert to them; but no language of mine can be necessary to excite sympathy, or to ensure the best efforts to alleviate distress. The calamity I allude to is unhappily no new occurrence. In 1845 it prevailed to a considerable extent; but the disease in the potatoes did not then begin at so early a period, nor was it attended with such disastrous results. Last year it began early in August, and it was of so fatal a character, that, with the exception of the potatoes planted early, nearly the entire crop was destroyed. I feel how incapable I am of describing the circumstances of the country; and figures and details of that kind cannot at all adequately represent its condition. I believe that an eleventh part of the whole arable land of Ireland, or 1,200,000 acres, are employed in potato cultivation, and not more than one-sixth of the crop escaped the disease that commenced in August. I am sensible that this gives but an imperfect view of the real amount of destruction, and it is to be recollected that the whole social relations of Ireland may be said to depend mainly upon the cultivation of the potato. It affects most intimately the relation between landlord and tenant, and the labourer is paid by the produce of the crop. If destroyed, therefore, it would be almost impossible to supply its place. I will not attempt any detail of the measures of Government to meet and remedy this great evil—the employment they have furnished, the facilities they have afforded to landed proprietors, and the assistance they have given to local consumption; but I cannot disguise from myself the painful truth, that distress has not been checked, and that the people of Ireland are at this moment in a most fearful state. I rejoice to find that Ministers mean to relax no exertions, and that still farther additions will be made to the supply of food. They mean also to remove any duty on the introduction of corn into Ireland, and they propose also to employ sugar instead of grain in breweries and distilleries. I rejoice heartily at these measures, but I cannot conceal from myself that they are only temporary. The permanent condition of Ireland cannot be improved by such palliatives; and on this account it especially behoves Parliament to take the whole subject into consideration, in order to devise means, not only of remedying the existing evil, but of preventing its recurrence. Having thus alluded to prevailing distress, I cannot but remark upon the patience with which it has been borne. It may be that excess of suffering has led in a few instances to violent language and intemperate conduct; but it would be doing injustice to the people of Ireland not to admit and admire the quiet endurance with which they have sustained this dreadful calamity. I will no longer dwell on the condition of Ireland, which is sure to excite the warmest sympathy, but advert to one or two other topics in Her Majesty's Speech. Another paragraph relates to the marriage of the Infanta of Spain with the Duke de Montpensier. On that subject, as the correspondence will soon be laid upon the Table, it would be premature to make any observations; it will be sufficient for the House, when it is in possession of the necessary information, to apply itself to the consideration of the question. There is another topic on which I wish to be allowed to say a few words; it relates to a Treaty of an ancient date, and to the destruction of the independence of Cracow; and I cannot refrain from expressing my surprise that such a violation of the sanctity of a treaty has occurred. I must, therefore, heartily join in the protest against this infringement of the plain stipulations of the Treaty of Vienna. Her Majesty has called our attention to the sanatory measures which are of importance to all the great towns of Her empire; and with reference to the inquiries of the Commissioners, I may remark that to Mr. Chadwick and Dr. Southwood Smith we have reason to be grateful for the application of skill and science to so interesting a subject. I shall not trouble the House further, but, thanking it for its forbearance, I beg leave to move the Address to Her Majesty. The hon. Member concluded by moving—

That an humble Address be presented to Her Majesty, humbly to thank Her Majesty for Her most gracious Speech from the Throne:

Humbly to inform Her Majesty, that we fully participate in the deep concern which Her Majesty expresses in having to call our attention to the dearth of provisions which prevails in Ireland and parts of Scotland:

To state to Her Majesty, that we lament to learn that, in Ireland especially, the loss of the usual food of the people has been the cause of severe sufferings, of disease, and of greatly increased mortality among the poorer classes. We deeply regret that outrages, chiefly against property, have become more frequent, and that, in some parts of the Country, the transit of provisions has been rendered unsafe:

To thank Her Majesty for informing us that, with a view to mitigate these evils, very large numbers of men have been employed, and have received wages, in pursuance of an Act passed in the last Session of Parliament; and to assure Her Majesty that we will take into our consideration the propriety of giving our sanction to the deviations from that Act, which have been authorized by the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, in order to promote more useful employment:

To thank Her Majesty for informing us, that means have been taken to lessen the pressure of want in Districts which are most remote from the ordinary sources of supply, and that outrages have been repressed, as far as it was possible, by the Military and Police:

Humbly to assure Her Majesty, that we participate in the satisfaction with which Her Majesty observes the exemplary patience and resignation of the People in many of the most distressed districts:

To express the regret with which we learn, that the difficulty of obtaining adequate supplies of provisions has been augmented by the deficiency of the harvest in France and Germany, and in some other parts of Europe:—To state to Her Majesty that, in compliance with Her Majesty's recommendation, we will not fail to consider what further measures may be required to alleviate the existing distress, and to take into our serious consideration whether by increasing, for a limited period, the facilities for importing Corn from Foreign Countries, and by the admission of Sugar more freely into Breweries and Distilleries, the supply of food may be beneficially augmented:

To assure Her Majesty that our earnest consideration shall be directed to the permanent condition of Ireland, and that we will avail ourselves of the opportunity afforded, by the absence of political excitement, to take a dispassionate survey of the social evils which afflict that part of the United Kingdom:

Humbly to thank Her Majesty for the assurance that various measures will be laid before us which are intended to raise the great mass of the people in comfort, to promote agriculture, and to lessen the pressure of that competition for the occupation of land which has been the fruitful source of crime and misery:

Humbly to thank Her Majesty, for informing us that the Marriage of the Infanta Luisa Fernanda of Spain with the Duke of Montpensier, has given rise to a Correspondence between the Government of Her Majesty and those of France and Spain:

Humbly to express our acknowledgments to Her Majesty, for informing us that the extinction of the free State of Cracow has appeared to Her Majesty to be so manifest a violation of the Treaty of Vienna, that Her Majesty has commanded that a Protest against that act should be delivered to the Courts of Vienna, Petersburg, and Berlin, which were parties to it, and for having directed that Copies of these several Papers shall be laid before us:

To assure Her Majesty, that we have learned with great satisfaction, that Her Majesty entertains confident hopes that the hostilities on the river Plate, which have so long interrupted commerce, may soon be terminated, and gratefully to acknowledge Her Majesty's assurance, that Her efforts, in conjunction with those of the King of the French, will be earnestly directed to that end:

That we rejoice to be informed, that Her Majesty's relations generally with Foreign Powers, inspire Her Majesty with the fullest confidence in the maintenance of Peace:

Humbly to thank Her Majesty, for having directed the Estimates to be prepared, with a view to provide for the efficiency of the Public Service, with a due regard for economy:

To thank Her Majesty, for informing us that Her Majesty has been graciously pleased to order every requisite preparation to be made for putting into operation the Act of the last Session of Parliament, for the establishment of Local Courts for the Recovery of Small Debts, and to assure Her Majesty, that we participate in the hope expressed by Her Majesty, that the enforcement of Civil Rights in all parts of the Country to which the Act relates, may, by this measure, be materially facilitated:

To assure Her Majesty that, in conformity with Her Majesty's gracious recommendation, we will direct our attention to the measures which will be laid before us for improving the Health of Towns, an object the importance of which we do not fail to appreciate:

To assure Her Majesty, that we fully participate in the deep sense Her Majesty entertains of the blessings, which, after a season of calamity, have so often been vouchsafed to this Nation by a superintending Providence; humbly to thank Her Majesty for confiding to us those important matters, for the gracious expression of Her Majesty's full conviction that our discussions will be guided by an impartial spirit, and for Her Majesty's hope, that, by our deliberations, the present sufferings of Her people may be lightened, and their future condition be improved."

Mr. RICARDO: I do not anticipate that any opposition will be offered to the Address, the Motion for presenting which to Her Majesty I have now the honour to second. I believe that if there were anything either of insertion or of omission that might be deemed exceptionable by any party in this House, they would be slow to offer obstructions to the Government at a time when so many of our fellow-subjects are eagerly looking for measures of immediate relief. I shall not descant on the distress in Ireland; and if, after what has been said by my hon. Friend, I allude to it at all, it will not be to claim your sympathy, or the expression of it, which I know have been long since afforded, nor to obtain credit to myself for peculiar sensibility, when I am sure it is shared by every Member who hears me; but to express my firm conviction that we shall come to the consideration of the subject with minds unbiassed by party hostilities or recollections. We shall all be actuated by the same motives to accomplish the same end—that of providing a remedy for the present national calamity, and of adopting measures that will prevent its recurrence. What those measures may be, I have no means of knowing; and indeed, if I did know them, it would perhaps be premature to discuss them now; but one mode of relief is pointed out in Her Majesty's Speech: I allude to the proposal to give facilities to the admission of foreign corn. This can only be, and is understood to be, by remitting the duty on foreign corn, and by relaxing the navigation laws as far as is necessary for its importation. So natural and so necessary has the first been deemed, that out of doors it has been the subject of universal discussion; and I hear but two objections to it. The one (and an extraordinary objection it is) is, that no larger quantity of corn will be admitted under free import than under the present duties. I shall have a word to say upon that presently; but in the meantime I cannot imagine any opposition on this score, because if no more corn will come in, at all events none will be kept out by the remission of the duty. The other objection is this—that a compact was entered into between Parliament and the agricultural interest, which it would be unfair to disturb or derange. Now, I confess that if I thought there was one party in the House who would deem it wise to take upon themselves the responsibility of having added one farthing to the price of food in the present emergency, in order to satisfy a punctilio like this, I do not believe that there is any other party who would be willing to accept such generosity. I do not believe that the agricultural party of 1847 will think or vote in a less disinterested manner than the agricultural Parliament of 1800, which under analogous circumstances not only remitted the duty, but put a bounty upon importation. I do not mean to say that the circumstances of the present day are as bad as they were in the year 1800; and I trust that the measures adopted by Government will prevent our arriving at such a climax of distress and destitution. But there is one element in the present circumstances to which I beg to call particular attention, which renders it doubly imperative upon us to refrain from imposing any, the slightest, check to the introduction of grain. We are not alone in our misfortunes: the scarcity extends over a great part of the continent of Europe. France, Holland, and Belgium, have opened their ports, so that there is a struggle among nations as to who shall obtain supplies of food for their people. We are, therefore, put on our defence, and it would be madness if we were to interpose obstructions which would prevent our obtaining a fair share of the produce of the world. The price of corn may now be taken at 70*s*. I will assume that as the price for the sake of argument. Thus a 4*s*. duty will be leviable, being 3*s*. more than under the old corn law. Now I maintain that we labour under a disadvantage to this amount in the competition Nobody will deny that a seller would sooner take his corn to a market free and open, than to a market where he had to pay a 4*s*. turnpike; he would sooner sell at 70*s*. in a free market, than at 73*s*. in a market where a 4*s*. duty was imposed; in the former he would be the gainer instead of the loser of a shilling. I do not mean to say that from our more intimate commercial relations with corn-growing countries, from our means of traffic with them, giving them commodities which they require, from our insular position and from our superior power of internal transport, we might not keep the price of corn lower than in neighbouring countries; but in order to do that, we must have equal facilities of admission and transmission. The first will be obtained by remitting the corn laws, and the second can only be insured by relaxing the navigation laws. I have been at some pains to find out what quantity of corn is likely to be required before next harvest. I do not wish to trouble the House with quotations and statistics, of which they entertain a very natural horror; but it is fair to state, and it is generally understood, that we annually receive from Ireland about two millions of quarters of corn. This year we shall receive none; and the probability is, that we shall have to export two millions of quarters to that country. Our average half-yearly import from abroad may be stated at one million in ordinary times; therefore, we have to make up a deficiency of five millions. I admit that I have heard from many practical men different calculations upon this point, some putting it higher and some lower; but, for the purpose of my argument, I am willing to take the deficiency at four millions of quarters. Now, four millions of quarters are equal to about 857,000 tons, and 857,000 tons will require upwards of 1,700 ships of 500 tons each. It is, therefore, quite evident that we cannot find ships of our own to carry the corn necessary to save the people from starvation. It is within my own personal knowledge that the present freight of corn from the Black Sea is actually 16*s*. per quarter, irrespective of insurance, of warehousing, and other ordinary charges. We know perfectly well that as soon as the navigation of the various rivers and canals in the United States, the Baltic, and the Black Sea is opened, that is to say, as soon as the ice will allow, every available ship will be taken up for the purpose of importing grain into this or into neighbouring countries. If we do not take it, depend upon it our neighbours will. The corn merchants will not wait till we fetch it; corn will be bought up wholesale by other countries, and retailed out to us at an advanced price. I do not believe that under these circumstances the most stanch supporter of the navigation laws can object to their temporary relaxation. For my part, I am free to confess—and in this I am expressing merely my own opinion—that when I consider that Great Britain is an island kingdom, with island colonies, whose empire is washed by nearly every sea that flows, while its subjects, scattered over the four quarters of the globe, may be said to be in almost daily communication—when I consider that our sailors are braving perils and disease in the cause of humanity in the torrid zone, or undergoing toils and privations in the cause of science in the frozen seas—when I reflect that our merchants are the best customers in all the markets of mankind, and that our manufacturers are surpassed by none in industry and ingenuity—when I call to mind our vast resources of capital, and our superiority in the construction of ships, and in every other way that capital can be employed, I would rather trust to these things than to the miserable remnant of a law made for other times and under other circumstances—a law, be it remembered, which failed when it was adopted, which in later times has been the main cause of our separation from our former colonies of America, and which even now is a fruitful source of discontent in your dependencies. One other measure of immediate relief is recommended in Her Majesty's Speech, the admission of sugar for the use of breweries and distilleries; but as I do not intend to abuse the indulgence the House has already shown me, I shall refrain from entering at large into the matter, which is one of considerable intricacy, and may advantageously be reserved to a later period. If, however, it can be shown that without loss to the revenue a considerable quantity of grain can be liberated, so as to be applied to the purposes of food, while at the same time one of the few luxuries within the reach of the working classes may be reduced in cost, it is hardly necessary to say that it is a measure not only expedient, but of bare justice to your colonies; by withdrawing a prohibition against them, when you have taken away that which they fancied to be beneficial to them. I should like to see all interests, agricultural, commercial, and colonial, dealt with alike; and I believe unless you do so, you cannot carry out principles, now, I am happy to say, generally understood and recognised. When I consider the success that has attended the new course, as far as you have abandoned the old, and that experience, as far as it has gone, has demonstrated the policy of the new system, by the increase of the customs' duties, even in spite of great reductions in an unparalleled number of articles—when I see the augmented consumption of articles of such vast necessity as sugar, timber, and brandy, I cannot wonder that it is the wish of the Government, at the head of which the noble Lord is now placed, to continue in the same path that was so wisely yet so cautiously trodden by his predecessor. That he will meet with difficulties and impediments there can be no doubt; but I trust that he will not shrink before them, whether they come in the shape of navigation or excise laws. Of this I am convinced, that other nations will not be slow to imitate your example—that they will soon find that it is better to buy economically than to manufacture expensively; and that capital will be diverted from competition into barter with us, to our mutual benefit. By such means relations will be established with foreign nations that will ensure the peace and happiness of the world; and, having followed the course we began, they will admit that we have earned the gratitude of posterity. I thank the House for the kindness with which it has heard me; and not thinking it necessary to advert to topics already touched by my hon. Friend, I have only to conclude by seconding the Address to Her Majesty.

The Address having been read by the SPEAKER—

MR. SMITH O'BRIEN said, that however reluctant he might be to disturb the equanimity of the House, or to violate in any respect the custom which might lead the House to receive with unanimity the Address in reply to the Speech, yet he felt that he should be wanting in his duty to his country if he remained silent on that occasion, or if he refrained from making an appeal to the House with respect to the present condition of Ireland, and for those in that country whose sufferings could not be exaggerated, and could not be described. He trusted that it would not be necessary for him to-night to recapitulate the circumstances which had occurred in Ireland during the last three months. If Gentlemen were not already familiarized with those circumstances, and if the horrors which had been witnessed had not affected their minds, nothing which he might add could move them. But he felt bound to say that from what he could learn by the most recent accounts, there was not only reason to suppose that those horrors would continue in all their frightful magnitude, but that they were increasing, and would continue to increase unless some adequate measures were introduced by that House with a view to put an end to them. He perceived by the latest Dublin newspaper which had arrived, that there were reported in one number no less than eight inquests upon persons in the county of Mayo, the verdict in all the cases being "Death by starvation," whilst the same paper gave an account of a family that had been subsisting for some time upon horseflesh—carrion which had been abandoned by the dogs and the wild birds of the air. He was asked, in common with the House, to say, by assenting to the Address, whether he were prepared to say that the Government had been altogether guiltless of having produced that frightful state of things; and if he were called upon to affirm that everything had been done by the Government which might have been done by them, he would answer that he believed it was in the power of the Government to prevent one single individual from dying of starvation in Ireland. He did not mean to impute to the Government any wilful intention of bringing about a state of things so disastrous; but it was his opinion, and the opinion of others in Ireland, that the Ministers had not introduced those measures which they might have adopted—that they had neglected to bring forward measures suitable for the condition in which Ireland had been placed, and had thus produced that state of things which was now witnessed. He would call the attention of the House to the declaration of the noble Lord opposite last Session—namely, that there was to be no legislative interference with the price of food, and he did so because he believed that to that declaration they owed many of the disasters which had taken place in Ireland. It would have been far better if the noble Lord had pledged himself that, so far as the Government was concerned, no human being should be permitted to die of starvation in Ireland. He trusted, hnwever, that by this time the noble Lord had seen that the commercial resources of Ireland were such as could not, without extraordinary aid, be deemed sufficient to meet the emergency, and that the capital employed in the provision trade, in milling, and in baking, could not be made applicable to the support of five millions of persons. When they looked to the capital and commercial enterprise of this country, in reference to the present state of things in Ireland, and as capable of meeting the demand, he would ask, would any one say that it would be possible in two months to direct the course of trade from this country to remote places in Ireland, where no such trade existed before, and thus to supply those districts with food? It was the duty of the Government, instead of leaving the supply to such means, to ransack every part of the civilized world, for the purpose of introducing every kind of produce into Ireland, and particularly into those places which were remote from markets, so that food might be placed within the reach of every individual in the country. When, therefore, the noble Lord at the head of the Government called upon him to give his approval of the course which the Government had taken, by asking him to affirm the Address, he would answer that he was not aware of sufficient supplies having been introduced by the Government into any place in Ireland; and consequently he could not express his approval of the course which had been taken. With respect to the duty on corn, he thought the proposition which the noble Lord now made was bold enough; but he would ask, why were not those restrictions removed three months ago? Why was not the necessity of which they were now speaking sufficient three months ago to justify removing the duties upon the importation of corn? Why was not Parliament called together three months ago for the purpose of suspending the navigation laws, and of prohibiting the use of corn in distilleries—of permitting the use of sugar in distilleries, and of employing Her Majesty's navy in the introduction of supplies of food to those parts of Ireland to which there existed no other means of supply? If the noble Lord asked him (Mr. Smith O'Brien) to affirm that the Government had done its duty in these respects, he could not acquiesce in such an affirmation. Then, with respect to the employment of the people, every one who was acquainted with Ireland—and he regretted that he was addressing an audience five-sixths of whom knew little or nothing about that country—every one acquainted with

Ireland was aware that the great number of labourers who required support could not be employed out of the ordinary resources of Ireland—that the gentry had suffered from diminished rents, some had none at all, and therefore were unable to give the usual amount of employment to the labourers—and that the farmers could not employ the usual amount of labour, in consequence of the great losses which they suffered from the failure of the potato crop—and that the absentees, whom the Legislature refused to tax, would not come forward to employ the people in their proportion. Such was the condition of Ireland. Such had been the effect of the system of government which had been pursued towards Ireland, that for several months in the year great numbers of the people were without employment, even when potatoes were most plentiful, and therefore there was the greater necessity for putting money into the hands of the people by means of employment, in order to enable them to purchase food this year, when their ordinary supply, the potato crop, had altogether failed. In such a state of things, it was only natural that the Government should provide resources of a temporary character. But what had they done? They had placed upon the Statute-book at the end of the Session an Act of Parliament usually known by the name of the Labour-rate Act, which gave a power to the Executive to undertake such works, with a view of employing the people as might be sanctioned by the presentment sessions to be held under the Act; but it provided that those works were to be of a public character alone. The gentry assembled in all parts of the country to carry that Act into effect, and the consequence was, that the country was consigned to barrenness, whilst the people were employed in all directions in destroying the roads, and cutting up fertile land: and thus the country was necesesarily involved in very great loss. He did not blame the Government so much for having passed an Act of that description with such precipitation, and in the absence of a great number of Irish Members. The Government might have been taken by surprise, as the Irish Members themselves had been, by what had occurred; for in August last it was impossible to foresee the extent to which the calamity had since reached; but there was no apology whatever for the Government not having taken more effectual measures as soon as they saw the extent of the calamity—no apology or excuse for its not having called Parliament together to meet the exigency. That would have been the constitutional course; and if the calamity existed in this country instead of Ireland, it was the course which would have been adopted. There was no excuse for the Government not having called Parliament together in November or October, for there were general remonstrances from every part of the country as to the expenditure of such large sums of money as those which were required under the Labour-rate Act, and for such useless, or rather such injurious, purposes. Instead, however, of doing that which was the duty of the Government, the right hon. Gentleman opposite (Mr. Labouchere) took upon himself to supersede the Legislature altogether, and did so without consulting the Irish Members, who were the legitimate representatives of Irish opinion. The right hon. Gentleman took it upon himself to declare by an official letter what the law was in Ireland under an Act which affected property in Ireland in the minutest manner, whilst the declaration of the law in that letter was couched in language which it was exceedingly difficult to understand. In his opinion, such a Minister setting such a precedent—for let it be remembered it was a precedent which might be used for future purposes—was deserving of impeachment. That was his opinion, and he would express it, though he stood alone. He would add, that the recommendations urged in the letter by the right hon. Gentleman had not even the merit of being practicable, at the same time that they were calculated to throw the country into confusion, and to prevent the exertions which might otherwise be made from private resources. Indeed, few works comparatively had been undertaken in accordance with that letter; for although exertions had been made to act upon the letter, it was impossible to carry out its recommendations. What they (the Irish Members) asked was, that the employment of the people should be no longer directed to works which were of an utterly unproductive character. At the present moment there were hundreds of thousands of men employed in destroying the roads, whilst, in consequence of that mode of employment being adopted, the land was left untilled; and if such a state of things were to continue, he had no hesitation in saying that the famine of the next year would be infinitely worse than the famine of the present year. They looked, then, with great interest to the course which the noble Lord would propose to adopt—on the one hand, to provide food for the people; and on the other hand, to provide reproductive employment; and he would say, that one hour ought not to be allowed to pass without letting the people of Ireland know what was to be their doom. With respect to the public works, the whole of them were undertaken upon the responsibility of the Government, so that the local boards of guardians and country gentlemen were not allowed to interfere at all in their direction, the whole being under the superintendence of the Board of Works. It was no wonder that much incapacity was exhibited in the administration—that was but natural, as it was impossible that a sufficient number of efficient functionaries could be found in so short a time; and the result of this was, that there had been a great deal of waste and of useless expenditure. It was evident, therefore, that the system which had been adopted by the Government was incommensurate with the evil which it was desirable to remedy in Ireland; for, notwithstanding that the Government had taken the whole responsibility of administering the Labour-rate Act throughout the country, there were whole districts in which its provisions had not been brought into action, and in which the people had been allowed to starve. Would the right hon. Gentleman opposite say why for the last two months the people of Skibbereen and other parts of the county of Cork had been allowed to remain, as was notorious, in a state of actual starvation? He did not suppose that in those districts there was any indisposition on the part of the magistrates and cess-payers to do what had been done in other parts of the country, and borrow money in order to give employment; and he should, therefore, be glad to hear what reason the right hon. Gentleman could state for not applying any remedy for the distress of Mayo and Skibbereen. It was stated in the public papers that the gentry in Mayo had taxed themselves at the presentment sessions for the purpose of providing employment for the people, and yet the machinery for carrying on public works had not been brought into operation, in consequence of which the people were dying by hundreds. There was another point with respect to which the people of Ireland ought to be afforded information at the earliest possible period, namely, was this to be considered as a local calamity, or was it to be considered as a national calamity? If the Irish Members were legislating in an Irish Parliament, it would be considered by them as a national calamity, and all classes —the fund-holder, the office-holder, the mortgagee, the annuitant — would be called on to contribute to the general exertion to alleviate the distress. He wished to learn whether the House considered this an imperial calamity or not; and whilst he, for his own part, refrained from any supplication to the imperial treasury, he could assure the House that there were millions in Ireland who did not consider the Union a union in which all the advantages ought to be on the part of England; and since England had the advantage of the Irish absentee rents, and of applying all the resources of Ireland, they did not consider that it ought to be looked upon as a union for the advantage of England alone, and no union when it was for the interests of Ireland. Nothing could be more outrageous, than that one class, who suffered most from the disasters which had taken place, namely, the landlords of Ireland, should be called upon to bear the whole burden of this calamity. He would ask the House to imagine five millions of the manufacturing population of England to be thrown out of employment by circumstances over which they could have had no control—by a foreign war, or any other circumstance which was calculated to produce such an effect—would any Member of that House say that, in such a case, the whole manufacturing property of the country ought to be confiscated? Yet that was said of the landed interest of Ireland. He was sorry to be obliged to commence the Session by remonstrance; he would rather have cause to approve of the conduct of the Government, for he had no desire to be placed in opposition to them; indeed, he was more inclined to acquiesce with them than with any other party in the House; but he felt bound to deny that justice had been done to all the interests of his country, or that proper means had been taken to prevent those evils which must continue, unless Parliament interfered to provide a remedy. He would abstain from entering into details; the committee which had been sitting in Dublin during the last month, had already laid before the country a variety of suggestions, which were in the possession of Government and of the people; and he was contented at the present moment to rest upon that document, and call upon the Government to carry into effect the measures, an outline of which was there presented. There were undoubtedly some additional measures which he should wish to see enacted; and he had no hesitation in saying that, provided these steps were adopted as preliminary, he, individually, was prepared to consent to an extension of the present Irish Poor Law, and should be glad to see an absentee tax coupled with those measures. But, abstaining, as he had said, from these details, his whole object in rising had been to elicit from the noble Lord (Lord J. Russell) something like a declaration as to what was to be the course of policy adopted by the Government under the present circumstances of Ireland; whether he adhered to that fatal pledge which he made, that there should be no interference with the course of trade in reference to the supply of food in Ireland; and whether starving multitudes, when they approached the Government, were to be met, not with relief (which they might expect), but with pamphlets such as he held in his hand. It would really seem enough to deny the people their request, without adding mockery and insult to the denial; but this was one of a number of pamphlets which were handed to the deputations from different parts of Ireland, when they came to represent to the Government the famine existing in their districts. They were presented with extracts from the 5th chapter of the 4th book of Adam Smith's *Wealth of Nations*. Other extracts of a similar character had been given them; they were referred to Sir Randolph Routh, and presented with extracts from Adam Smith and Burke, when they brought accounts of the sufferings of the people. He had to apologize to the House for having undertaken a task which he knew to be not at all acceptable; he knew that his opinions with reference to the political economists of the House, and the duty of the Government and of the Legislature, were not acceptable there. He had no hesitation in repeating what he had often said elsewhere, that if the Irish people were allowed the management of their own resources, he should, for one, be most happy to relieve that House from the responsibility of voting one single guinea for their protection from famine; but, so long as the English Government administered Irish resources and revenues, so long he could not think them justified in shrinking from the responsibility which belonged to that station; and he must throw upon the Government the responsibility of every death which occurred, if they did not take such measures as might justly and fairly be expected from them.

Mr. P. SCROPE had had no intention of addressing the House; but as the hon. Member (Mr. S. O'Brien) had spoken in a manner which would probably call forth some explanation from the Government, as to the course they had taken with reference to the distress in Ireland, and as the hon. Member had refrained from calling attention to one branch of the question in which he felt considerable interest, he might perhaps be permitted to ask that the explanation be extended to that point also. The hon. Member had been speaking of the means which the Government had put in force for insuring employment, and through employment a maintenance to the able-bodied population of Ireland suffering under the loss of the potato crop; but he said nothing as to the means that might have been taken for affording relief to that large portion who had been necessarily unable to work for their subsistence—that class, perhaps larger in Ireland than in any other country, called the impotent poor, consisting of the aged, the infirm, the sick, the widows, the orphans, the young women, and, in fact, women of all ages, that had not a husband to provide for them. Assuming for the moment, that the measures of Government were sufficient for the maintenance of the able-bodied population in destitution, it must be remembered that the proposal was limited to giving as low a rate of wages as possible to those employed—a rate calculated at first, he believed, at some fraction under the ordinary rate of wages in Ireland when the population subsisted upon cheap potatoes, but which it was quite impossible to suppose could maintain a labourer with an average family under the high price of the grain food to which he had been obliged to resort. But, even if the able-bodied labourer could maintain his family upon the wages obtained on public works, what was to become of the infirm poor who had no able-bodied person to work for them? As far as he understood, the scheme of the Government was confined to this—that for the destitute infirm poor they looked to the relief to be afforded by voluntary contributions, or the workhouse system which was in force under the law of 1837. Now, first, as to voluntary contributions, how could it have been expected that these should be adequate to this purpose? They were to be collected by the relief committees; but those committees were interdicted from using the money for the maintenance of the infirm poor: they were required to sell provisions only at cost price to those who were able to buy them. That was the meaning of the instructions to them in the autumn, as far as he could make out; if he were wrong, it was the very point on which he wished to be corrected; at all events, the relief committees were so far interdicted from giving food away, that, if they did so, they put themselves out of the possibility of receiving that moiety or equal grant from the Government which was promised to them in case of their confining their contributions to the course indicated by the Government, viz., the employment of the poor, or selling food at prime cost. The experience of past years ought to have taught the Government that it should not place reliance upon the voluntary contributions of the wealthy classes of Ireland. That source had always failed, whether in ordinary or extraordinary times. It had been absolutely necessary, whenever there was a failure of the crop upon which the Irish were in the habit of subsisting, to have recourse to the charity of England; and he could not understand how the Government could have supposed it possible, in an emergency like that which they were called to anticipate last autumn, that adequate voluntary contributions should be forthcoming. But then there was the workhouse system. Now, what did that amount to? One hundred and thirty workhouses were established in Ireland, and they were built to contain the one-hundredth part of the population; but since we maintained in England, out of our poor rates, 10 per cent of our population, we might expect full that amount of destitution in Ireland in ordinary times, and in extraordinary times a much larger. He (Mr. P. Scrope) could not, therefore, for a moment suppose that the workhouse was expected to be adequate to the destitution. The fact was, that in a vast number of cases, if we might believe the published reports, the workhouse had been so crowded that the guardians had been obliged to shut their doors and refuse admission to any more; and before this they had admitted so many that fever had got a footing in the wards, and propagated itself and assumed a contagious character, till the workhouse had become, instead of the means of relief to the poor, the means of destroying them. There was almost a certainty that a fever would be communicated to them, and carry them off. He did not wish to bring any charge against the Government; he merely asked for an explanation why they had not interfered in a more vigorous manner, and why they had not authorized or required the local authorities established over the whole country under the poor law of 1837, to become responsible for the maintenance of the population, and most especially for saving the infirm destitute from starving? That that had not been done, was evident from the facts brought before the public during the last few weeks. He by no means wished to throw on the Government a responsibility, as the hon. Member (Mr. W. S. O'Brien) had done, for these horrible events; but he thought, certainly, they must have mistaken their powers, or mistaken the resources at their command. He could not but believe that if Ministers had applied a proper remedy—if they had last year imposed upon the local authorities the duty of preventing starvation in their own neighbourhoods—aware as those authorities must be of the amount of destitution, great misery would have been prevented. Those authorities might either from their own means, or the means afforded or lent them by the Government, have provided such supplies of food as would have prevented starvation. We should not then have heard of Skibbereen and other cases, in which the poor seemed to be left to die, to be swept off the face of the earth as might happen, without having any one to assist or care for them. These points required explanation; he brought them forward without any view of causing the slightest uneasiness to the Government; but, feeling very strongly that measures had not been taken which might have been taken to avert the misery which had occurred, and was now existing in great part of Ireland, he should have felt himself wanting in his duty if he had not taken the earliest opportunity of calling the attention of the Government to the matter.

MR. LABOUCHERE: Sir, although during the many years for which I have now had the honour of being a Member of this House, I have frequently experienced its kindness, I confess that I never rose under a deeper sense of the responsibility which lies upon me, or under a stronger impression how much I shall stand in need of the kind indulgence of the House during the short time I shall have to address it. The hon.

Member for Limerick (Mr. W. S. O'Brien) has in very strong language described the misery which at present prevails in Ireland. I wish it was in my power to say to the House that I thought the hon. Member had overcharged the picture. There has been, doubtless, in particular cases, in the accounts that have gone forth to the public, great exaggeration; there have been many mistakes. But if I am asked whether the picture which has been presented to the House is an overcharged representation of that which has taken place, and actually is taking place, I cannot, consistently with truth and with my duty to the House, say that it is exaggerated. I ask the House, before they do, as the hon. Gentleman the Member for Limerick (Mr. W. S. O'Brien) proposes—before they throw upon the Government the responsibility of these calamities, and say that every death which has taken place ought to weigh upon the consciences of Ministers, what is the calamity which has reduced Ireland to a state of famine? Consider, first, what is the ordinary condition of Ireland? What was the country in which this calamity has taken place? It was a country of which it was no exaggeration for Lord Devon's Commission to say, that the people were the worst housed, the worst fed, and the worst clothed of any in Europe. It was a country of which I derive this account, as regards a great part of its population, from a most unexceptionable source, the Report of the Commissioners of Poor Law Inquiry made in 1835:—

> "That there are 1,131,715 agricultural labourers whose average earnings do not exceed from 2*s.* to 2*s.* 6*d.* a-week; that one-half of that number are destitute of work during thirty weeks in the year; and that these with their families make a total of 2,355,000 out of work and in distress thirty weeks in the year."

This is the ordinary condition of Ireland; and on a country thus circumstanced in ordinary times, what must be the effect of such a calamity as that which has occurred? I believe it is without a parallel in modern times. By the visitation of Providence the food of the great body of the people has been swept away to such an extent that experience has proved it to be almost a total failure. I have endeavoured to obtain, from sources on which I can place reliance, some calculations of the loss which the people of Ireland have sustained, as regards both money and food, from the failure of the potato crop. I asked Mr. Griffith, one of the highest statistical authorities to whom reference could be made, for an estimate of the loss. In the return which he has given me, Mr. Griffith calculates upon the produce of 1,500,000 cultivated acres, usually yielding a crop of the value of 15,000,000*l.*, a loss of three-fourths, or 11,250,000*l.* The crop next in importance, the oat crop, also failed to a very considerable extent; and particularly in the most distressed districts. Mr. Griffith told me that he could not calculate the loss on that crop at less than one-third of the ordinary produce. The old crop he calculates as yielding, on 4,000,000 acres, produce equal in value to 14,000,000*l.*, making a total loss of 4,666,000*l.*; so that the whole loss to the people of Ireland on the potato and oat crops amounts to no less than 15,916,000*l.* Mr. Griffith stated that, by estimating the area of productive land in Ireland at 14,000,000 statute acres, the annual produce, under ordinary circumstances, has hitherto been nearly as follows:—

	£.
Potatoes, 1,500,000 acres, at the average value of 10*l.* per statute acre .	15,000,000
Oats, 4,000,000 acres, at the average value of 3*l.* 10*s.* per statute acre...	14,000,000
Wheat, flax, and green crops, 2,000,000 acres, at the average value of 7*l.* per statute acre	14,000,000
Pasture and meadow, 6,500,000 acres, at the average value of 1*l.* 5*s.* per statute acre	8,125,000
	£ 51,125,000

ESTIMATED LOSS OF PRODUCE FOR THE YEAR 1846.

	£.
Potato crop, value of ordinary produce 15,000,000*l.*, loss, say three-fourths	11,250,000
Oat crop, value 14,000,000*l.*, loss, say one-third	4,666,000
Total loss ...	£ 15,916,000

or say 16,000,000*l.* It is the mere money value of the produce which is estimated in this statement; but here is another calculation of the loss of produce by weight and measure, which I have received from Mr. Griffith:—

LOSS OF PRODUCE CALCULATED BY WEIGHT AND MEASURE.

	Tons.
Potatoes, 1,500,000 of acres, produce	11,250,000
Loss, three-fourths	8,437,500

Oats, 4,000,000 of acres, produce 24,000,000 barrels of 14 stone.

Loss, one-third = 8,000,000 barrels; in quarters, 5,227,000.

But the House will form a very inadequate conception of the calamity which has befallen Ireland if they look to the loss merely of money, or to the quantity of human food abstracted from the stock available in ordinary years. I shall not enter into details; but if the House considers how the cultivation of the potato is mixed up and interwoven with the whole interests of Ireland, you will have some idea of the effect which the total destruction of the potato crop has produced. If you consider its effects upon the cottier, its effects upon the small conacre farmer, who has not only to raise food for his own consumption, but has a family to maintain, which, under existing circumstances, he is totally incapable of maintaining—its sad effects upon the farm labourer, whom the farmer was accustomed to keep in his house and feed upon potatoes, but is now obliged to turn off and throw upon society; any one acquainted with the structure of society in Ireland, who duly considers the operation of the causes which have recently been at work upon the social and agricultural system of Ireland, may be able to form some idea of the extent of the calamity which has fallen upon Ireland. The hon. Gentleman the Member for Limerick (Mr. W. S. O'Brien) described the deaths in Mayo, and charged the Government with having occasioned that misfortune. What is the ordinary condition of Mayo? Wretched as Ireland is, that county stands pre-eminent in wretchedness. Looking at the Report of the same Poor Law Commissioners from which I have already quoted, I find this expression used by one of the witnesses, that "the county of Mayo alone could furnish beggars to all England." Am I to be told that the Government is to be charged, as it has been, with the sufferings of the people, on the assumption that they were able to avert a calamity, the extent of which I do not seek to hide or diminish, but for which their conduct is subjected to criticism, unjust exactly in proportion as I know their accuser has had opportunities of judging what are the real circumstances of the case? The hon. Gentleman went on to attack my noble Friend the First Minister of the Crown, because he said he adhered to a pledge given at the end of the last Session of Parliament, not to interfere with the ordinary supply of food. In the first place, I do not think the hon. Gentleman has accurately stated what was the pledge. It was that the Government would not meddle with the import trade in provisions from foreign countries. And I say, now, looking to the whole that has happened since, that Government has firmly and under much obloquy persevered, that I know nothing more criminal in a Government than, against their reason and conviction, to abandon the course to which they have pledged themselves, to reverse their policy on such a matter, unless they are satisfied that it is for the public good. Of this I am quite sure, that if the Government had adopted the recommendation of the hon. Gentleman, and turned importers on a large scale, the attempt would have utterly failed. A short period of artificial abundance would have been followed by all the horrors of famine, aggravated by the clumsy expedient to which the Government would have had recourse. The hon. Gentleman speaks as if the powers of Government were unlimited. There cannot be a more complete and utter mistake. I am quite ready to allow that in extraordinary circumstances the Government may step out of its way, and afford facilities which in ordinary circumstances are rather to be avoided. But they are called upon to set aside the laws of trade altogether, and to reduce prices, on a great scale, below their natural level. Such an attempt could never have been successful. The population which has to be supplied in Ireland amounts to 8,000,000: and who does not know that if the Government had turned merchant, the consequence would have been that in a very short time all trade would have been paralysed? So absurd an attempt on the part of Government would have ended in complete failure, and would have aggravated the misery it was intended to alleviate. The pledge of the Government was, that they would not import corn from abroad into Ireland under any circumstances. It was necessary to speak out upon that point. The conduct of the previous Government excited the fears of the import merchants. They said, "It is but fair to let us know what you intend to do. Do you mean to go to the American market?" And I do rejoice, after what has taken place, that my noble Friend (Lord John Russell) spoke out—that he gave that pledge—that he adhered to it; and of this I am assured, that any other course would have been disastrous. But he gave that pledge with a modification to which I would call the attention of the House. He said, "I will not interfere with the import trade." He said, also, "I will not interfere under ordinary circumstances with the retail trade." But there are parts of the country where there is a want of retail traders. There is always a balance of difficulties and dangers when the question of interference is raised. When you do interfere, you are apt to drive away the private trader. On due consideration, we came to the conclusion, that it was advisable to interfere; but that we ought to draw this distinction, that in the country west of the Shannon, and on the southern coasts of Cork and Kerry, as well as in the north from Donegal, there was really such a state of circumstances, owing to the difficulty of communication, that the Government would do more good than harm by interfering; but that in Ireland, generally, not only do I believe that the Government would have done a great deal more harm than good by interference, but that such interference was an absolute impossibility. The hon. Gentleman (Mr. W. S. O'Brien) reproached us for not following the example of the right hon. Baronet the Member for Tamworth (Sir R. Peel), when he, as First Minister of the Crown, had to deal with a calamity of a similar description. The circumstances, however, were entirely different. We were under a system of restriction, and the right hon. Gentleman took the very useful and praiseworthy step of introducing Indian meal, which was then altogether prohibited, to accustom the Irish to that new article of food, to which private traders had not resorted; and the effects were very excellent. The right hon. Gentleman conducted that experiment with entire secrecy, because to be successful it must be secret. But could that experiment be repeated? I recollect the express declaration of the right hon. Gentleman when this matter was under discussion last year, that this might be done once very properly, but he would not do it again. The circumstances were not at all parallel; the comparison was altogether fallacious. The hon. Gentleman (Mr. S. O'Brien) went on to criticize the manner in which the Government had applied those means which Parliament had afforded for giving employment to the people. I need scarcely remind the House of what has taken place in this respect. My noble Friend's Government came into office at the close of last Session. There were even then indications of a severe scarcity in Ireland, and we had to consider how we should meet it. The Government which preceded us had adopted a system which received the sanction of this House, and which was to operate by affording employment to the mass of the people through the medium of payments for labour on public works. Undoubtedly, that system, as adopted by the late Government, was open to great abuses. But, upon the whole, doing our best to check such abuses, we proposed to give the poor employment as before. But we never expected and never recommended this measure as one which in itself was intended to provide for the whole labouring population. We were in hopes that the effect would be to stimulate the landed proprietors to employ the labouring population upon useful reproductive works rather than upon public works. In that anticipation we in a great degree have been disappointed. I believe the magnitude of the calamity has had a great effect; but I heard with great surprise the hon. Gentleman, an Irishman, talk of impeaching the Government for having acted on their own responsibility when they found things taking such a course, and a mass of labour thrown on the public works—for having, with the unanimous voice of the landowners of Ireland in their favour, tried, on their own responsibility, to supply a remedy. If he is prepared to propose that I should be censured for having put my name to the letter in which the resolution of the Government was announced, I believe he will not find another Irish Member to second his Motion. The hon. Gentleman went on to say that this system of public works was cumbersome, and full of evils. The officers employed were accused of incapacity. I must say, if that observation is meant to apply to the officers of the Board of Works, no censure could be made more unjustly and undeservedly. [Mr. SMITH O'BRIEN: I meant the persons they employed.] I do not deny that some of these persons may have been incompetent to the discharge of the duties which they had undertaken to perform; but this testimony is owing on my part to the officers of the Board of Works generally, that I believe it impossible for public servants to work with greater assiduity, with greater zeal, or with greater success. Will the hon. Gentleman consider on what a scale these operations have been carried on? I believe that at the moment that I am addressing the House, not less than 450,000 persons are employed on the public works in Ireland. In September last there were about 30,000 persons employed; in October there were 150,000; in November, 285,000; and in December, 440,000. The hon. Gentleman says, that the officers of the Board of Works are not all competent persons; but I will just state what an army of them there are. Of inspecting officers there are 74; there are 36 engineers, 385 assistant surveyors and engineers, 2,832 check clerks, 6,894 overseers, and 495 pay clerks. This, Sir, shows the gigantic effort which has been made by the Government to meet the calamity which has fallen on Ireland. I can understand Gentlemen saying that we did not act in the right direction—I can understand the Government being blamed for the course which they adopted; but I confess I cannot understand how any one can blame us for not having used vigorously and effectively the means which Parliament placed within our power to mitigate the calamity with which we had to deal. I have no doubt that our efforts have had an immense effect in mitigating this misfortune. It is undoubtedly true, that all that we have done has not been able to prevent famine and disease in many parts of Ireland; but it does not follow that this state of things would not have been worse if they had been left to themselves, and if the enormous efforts which we have made had not been undertaken with a view of meeting this misfortune. I have no hesitation in saying, that the great expenditure of money, and the employment provided for the people, have had an immense effect in enabling the people of Ireland to resist the pressure of the calamity. The hon. Gentleman then went on to ask, whether we considered this misfortune as a local or a general one?—whether we considered the question as one which exclusively belonged to Ireland, and the whole pressure of which should be borne by Ireland? or, whether we considered it one which had occurred to the whole British empire, and to which, as such, the resources of the British empire should be brought in aid? I have no difficulty in answering that question. I do not intend to anticipate the discussion which will take place more properly when the measures which the Government have to propose regarding Ireland have been laid before the House and the public, and which my noble Friend has promised in the course of a few days; but I have no hesitation in saying, that, looking to the extent and the peculiar manner in which the calamity—although affecting England, and still more Scotland, partially—has afflicted Ireland, so utterly out of proportion to its own resources, and to the manner in which it has fallen on other parts of the empire —I repeat, that I have no hesitation in saying to the House, that I consider it an imperial question, and that we shall be prepared by all just and legitimate means to assist the people of Ireland to grapple with the distress. I hope that all parts of the empire will do their duty. I think that Ireland is perfectly right in expecting that England and Scotland will assist her. On the other hand, I think that the gentry and people of Ireland will be expected to show their disposition to leave nothing undone, on their part, to contend with the calamity which has overtaken them; and they may be assured that the willingness of the people of England to assist them will be in exact proportion to the willingness which they find on the part of the landlords and gentry of Ireland to do their duty. And, for my own part, I must say, that I have seen in Ireland a very improved spirit in this respect springing up. In many instances there was at first a feeling of discouragement, which was perhaps natural under the circumstances, felt by many landowners; but I believe that they are now awakening to the conviction that the safest way of meeting the disaster is by the immediate instrumentality and agency of Ireland's own children. I am sure that they will find, not only the warmest sympathy in England and throughout the British empire, but the most cordial willingness to assist them; but their assistance can only be given usefully, can only be given honourably, can only be given safely, provided the cordial co-operation of those in Ireland, whose property and station enable them to assist the Imperial Legislature and Government in carrying into effect those measures which they may be prepared to recommend in the circumstances. My hon. Friend the Member for Stroud (Mr. P. Scrope) next asked a question on another branch of the subject; and to the best of my ability I will give him an answer. At the same time, I think that the greater part of his speech rather anticipated a discussion which will doubtless occupy the attention of the House on a future occasion—I mean the question of the Irish Poor Law—than bore any direct reference to the present condition of Ireland. My hon. Friend asks what measures Government have adopted to provide, not for that class of the people of Ireland, namely, the able-bodied labourer who was thrown out of employment, but for the enormous mass of destitution which, under all circumstances, was constantly found in Ireland, and which, on the present occasion, had swollen to an extraordinary extent, namely, the sick and infirm poor? Now, I have to state, in reply, that the principal weight of dealing with this class of society fell upon the relief committees. The present poor law was obviously inadequate to grapple with the calamity; and I will add, that I think any poor law would have been unable to grapple with it. I believe, that if at the instance of my hon. Friend the Legislature had passed last Session a poor law for Ireland exactly similar to that of England, it would have entirely broken down in the attempt to provide for the present destitution in Ireland. Those Gentlemen who are acquainted with the difficulty which has been found in providing for the poor in the most destitute part of Ireland, will have some notion what would have been the result if the whole pressure of that destitution had fallen upon the poor law. I believe, indeed, that the thing would have been utterly impossible. The Government must have come to the relief of the community in some shape or another, whether or not there had been a poor law of the kind referred to by my hon. Friend. I therefore say that the destruction of human life which has unfortunately taken place in Ireland cannot be traced to the circumstance of this House not having passed such a poor law. I am not now giving any opinion upon the subject of a poor law for Ireland. That is a grave and serious question, and it is a doubly serious one under the circumstances in which the House will have to discuss it. All I say is, that my hon. Friend's panacea would not have been found of any avail in Ireland, and that an English poor law would not, under present circumstances, have been found sufficient to avert starvation and death from the destitute poor in that country, unless Government had come to their relief and assistance in some extraordinary manner in addition to the operation of a poor law. Now my hon. Friend wishes to know what course we have adopted in those parts of the country where there was great destitution. My answer is, that we have called in the principle of relief committees—which we consider the only safe principle, viz., to entrust the relief of destitution to some local authorities, and to avoid undertaking, through the machinery of Government officers, everywhere, to dole out food and provide employment for the suffering poor. But we said to those relief committees, "You will exert yourselves. If you raise money by local subscriptions, and relieve the distress out of the funds thus collected, we will give money to aid you in your endeavours to mitigate this distress." And I can assure the House that in this way much good was effected by these relief committees. The amount of human suffering which has been alleviated, —the number of human beings who have been kept alive by these means—is immense; and I am sure, if I could lay an accurate statement before you of the good which has been effected, the House would at once see that the machinery has not been unavailing for the purpose for which it was instituted, and that the frightful misfortune has been greatly mitigated. What was the principle which the Government adopted in dealing with these relief committees? I assure my hon. Friend that he has entirely misapprehended it. We began when the distress was not so severe as it is now, by making grants to the extent of one-half of what the committee collected; that is to say, for every 100*l.* they collected we gave 50*l.* When the distress had increased, we stated our willingness to give pound for pound with them; that for every pound collected by the local societies we should give another pound; and in some cases we offered even to exceed that proportion. In this way we were enabled to do good to an immense extent. You hear of deaths here and there arising from starvation, but you do not hear of the multitude who have been saved by the relief committees. I admit with sorrow that famine has produced deaths in Ireland; but how can we expect, when we look abroad and find what both France and Germany have suffered from the pressure of famine, that in such a country as Ireland, where it has pleased Providence to visit the people so heavily, any efforts of Government, or any measures of the Legislature, could prevent the calamity producing such results as those to which I am alluding? My hon. Friend has said, that we made it an indispensable requisite, on advancing money to the relief committees, that they were neither to sell nor give away food under cost price. I assure my hon Friend that it was not so. We drew this distinction with respect to the sale and giving away of food. We thought we ought not to sell food except at the market price; and we did so for this reason—that we did not wish to drive away the retail trader. The Government could not have acted otherwise, for it was of the utmost consequence that the retail dealers should not be undersold. There is now a retail trade slowly but steadily growing up in Ireland, which it is of the utmost importance to foster, both as regards the present and the future condition of that country. Ireland can no longer exist without possessing such a trade. The people of that country must hereafter be a people receiving money wages; they must receive cash with which to furnish themselves with the necessary supplies of food, instead of depending as hitherto solely upon the potato for subsistence. If such be the case, the means of procuring food with their money must be placed within their reach. This can be only permanently and beneficially accomplished by fostering the growth of an extensive retail trade in Ireland. If the Government of this country is not to supply food to the people of Ireland at all times—if Ireland is to be put in a position in which she can subsist her own population, it would have been questionable policy in the Government, to say the least of it, to have taken any steps inconsistent with the growth of such a trade. But whilst Her Majesty's Government sought to avoid doing that which might have proved inconsistent with the security and growth of a retail trade in Ireland, it did not preclude the committees from giving relief in those cases in which an absolute necessity for such relief might appear; nay more, it gave them assistance to enable them to give relief. There appeared to be no danger to the retail trade from these merely eleemosynary gifts to those who were starving. We thought that this principle of eleemosynary relief had its own natural limits, and that it could not produce any bad impression upon the trade of the country. This was the system adopted by the Government, and it was a system which I believe was, on the whole, both sound and just. But my hon. Friend thinks that nothing very effective to meet the existing calamity was accomplished under this system. But I can assure my hon. Friend that he vastly underrates the good effects which proceeded from it. Through the instrumentality of the relief committees, soup kitchens, with cheap but wholesome modes of preparing food, were established over the country, particularly in the distressed districts of Mayo and Cork, where the existing calamity has appeared in its most alarming aspect, and to the greatest extent. I can further assure my hon. Friend that through the instrumentality of such establishments much good has been effected, much suffering has been relieved, and much crime prevented. Before I sit down, as I shall not have another opportunity of addressing the House on the present occasion, there is one part of the condition of Ireland to which I am desirous of adverting—a part which is alluded to in Her Majesty's Speech, and to which it is of the utmost importance that the attention of the House should be directed. Her Majesty states in Her Speech that outrages have taken place in various parts of the country, and that the public peace has been subject to frequent disturbance. This, to a great extent, has been the case before; and I think that it is not surprising that now, with famine desolating the country in the manner which I have described, that the bonds of society should become relaxed, and that outrages against the laws should be committed. But Sir, whilst I admit this to be the case, and whilst it is but right that the attention of the House should be earnestly directed to it, it is also most important that the House should form no misconception of the real nature of the outrages which have latterly been committed. The general character which may be given of the present state of Ireland in this respect, amounts to this. There has been an immense increase in the number of outrages generally. But if we analyse the catalogue of these outrages, we find that the increase has principally taken place in crimes connected with attacks on property. The old agrarian outrages, which once formed so heavy and melancholy a proportion of Irish offences, instead of increasing have actually diminished. This cheering result may also be noticed. There is now to be found little or none of that sympathy with the offenders which formerly so extensively prevailed. There is now no difficulty, therefore, in getting convictions when parties are guilty—no difficulty in enforcing the law. Nor is there, as before, any difficulty in getting prosecutors to come forward, in finding witnesses, or in getting jurors to convict. I venture to say that during the sessions which are even now going on in Ireland, the law is administered as regularly, and executed as effectually there, as in any other part of the British empire. This is a most remarkable, as it is a moral, feature in the condition of Ireland, and one which the House should not lose sight of in considering the measures which it will be the duty of Her Majesty's Government shortly to lay before it, for the present relief and permanent amelioration of Ireland. On comparing the state of crime in December, 1845, and December, 1846, I find that in December, 1846, the number of burglaries were 167, whereas in December, 1845, they were only 36; that highway robberies in the former period were 115, and in the latter, only 26; that the number of cases of cattle-stealing in December, 1845, were only 80; whereas in December, 1846, they were 1,389. I find, also, that the crime of robbing people on the high roads, and of breaking into houses for the purpose of stealing money, which were crimes almost unknown in Ireland until a very recent period, now constitute a very serious item in Irish crime. Now, on the other hand, I have here a return, showing the number of agrarian outrages in 1844, 1845, and 1846—from which I find that in 1844 there were 2,000; in 1845, 1,920; and in 1846, only 1,304. I have said that it is a gratifying circumstance in the condition of Ireland that there is no difficulty in vindicating the law. A remarkable instance of this occurred in the autumn of the past year, when it became the duty of the Government to prosecute the persons who were engaged in the violent assaults upon the bakers' shops, and other riotous proceedings in the town of Dungarvan. The persons who were put upon their trial for these offences all pleaded guilty, and their ringleader was subjected to the punishment of imprisonment for two years, while the rest were allowed to escape with very moderate punishments. I mention this to show that in the present state of things in Ireland, we find no difficulty in obtaining that support in courts of justice for the law which the Government are entitled to expect; and I call the attention of the House to it as a most gratifying circumstance, that amidst all the present distress in Ireland, there is no occasion to propose a law of a more restrictive character than at present. My noble Friend (Lord John Russell) reminds me, that among the other charges of the hon. Member for Limerick against the Government was this one—that we ought to have called Parliament together in November—and that at least we ought to have called upon the Irish Members to give their opinion on the subject. I can say, that I was in Ireland at that time, and was in the habit of seeing Irish gentlemen, both representatives and others, in great numbers, and of asking their opinion freely on Irish matters; and I do not recollect a single person who said it was advisable to call Parliament together in November. The general advice I received was, "For Heaven's sake do not call Parliament together just now." They said, "Take on yourselves the responsibility of doing what you think right and necessary; but if you call Parliament together in the present condition of the country, you will lead everybody to suppose that some new scheme is to be introduced. A stop will thus be put to the progress of public works, and everything will be thrown into confusion." This was the language universally addressed to the Government. On every side we were told to act for ourselves, and trust to Parliament for indemnity and justification; and were assured that, if Parliament were at that time to be assembled, everything in Ireland likely to afford employment to the people, would be hung up in suspense. I said before, that I did not think the hon. Member for Limerick would find a seconder for his Motion of impeachment against me; and I now say, that I do not believe he can find another Irish Member who concurs with him in thinking that Parliament ought to have been called together in November last. It would be improper in me to advert more particularly to those measures which the Government will soon lay before Parliament. Undoubtedly a graver, a more difficult, or a more complicated question, has never been submitted to its consideration. I feel perfectly convinced, that whatever judgment the House may ultimately pronounce respecting the measures which are about to be proposed by the Government, the Imperial Parliament will approach this grave question in a spirit worthy of the subject. I feel satisfied that hon. Members will bring to its consideration no party feeling—no local jealousies; there will be no question as to English, Scotch, or Irish interests, but all will be actuated by the desire of doing what is just and right. I have before stated my conviction that the nature of the calamity which has fallen upon Ireland is such—its peculiar pressure and extent are such—as to justify the people of that country in not asking the assistance and support of the British empire as a boon, but claiming it as a right. That assistance will, I am sure, be given to them in no unfriendly spirit. Short as my official connexion with Ireland has been, I have known enough of the country to excite in my mind the greatest sorrow for her misfortunes, and I hope that the landlords of Ireland will justify the exertions of the Government and Parliament of Great Britain, by showing their own determination to leave nothing undone—nothing untried, and to omit no exertion to grapple themselves with the calamity which has befallen their country. All the power and influence of Great Britain—vast as it is—will prove unavailing to meet the danger if not aided by Irish co-operation and exertion. I myself would place no limit to the assistance which the empire should give to Ireland in her hour of misfortune, except this—that it would be disastrous to Ireland herself to foster in that country the feeling that she is to rely altogether on this country, and that her own children are not called upon to exert themselves courageously and manfully to serve themselves. I think we should be teaching a bad lesson to Ireland, and doing her the greatest possible injury, if we were to encourage such a feeling as that. I am sure the Irish Members will have no cause for thinking that their country is treated in an unkind and unfriendly manner; but, on the other hand, they must show that they are determined themselves to meet the calamity which has befallen their country. I feel that it is unnecessary for me to detain the House further on the present occasion. I will conclude by saying, that when the measures upon which the Government have resolved shall be laid before the House, I believe it will be found that they have been properly framed with a view to meet the misfortune which has visited Ireland, and also promote local improvements of a permanent nature. It is painful to contemplate the present condition of Ireland, but yet I am not without hope that out of evil good may come. There is much that is vicious in the social system of Ireland—much that is productive of misery; and I feel that it is consistent with the most sincere compassion for her misfortunes, to express a hope that such good results may flow from her present misery as may prevent the recurrence of it.

Lord G. BENTINCK said: Sir, I have listened with attention to the statement which the right hon. Gentleman has just addressed to the House, and I beg to say, in the name of the party with which I act, that they have no desire to make Ireland the battle-field of party. My Friends feel, and I am deeply sensible, that Ministers have been brought to the government of Ireland under circumstances of peculiar difficulty. We feel that we have had some share in putting them in possession of the reins of Irish government, and at a period so shortly previous to this calamity coming upon Ireland, that they have not had fair play in dealing with the difficulties with which Ireland is oppressed; and, more than that, we feel that it is due to Her Majesty's Ministers to look upon with indulgence and treat with leniency those measures and those acts with which we may not altogether concur. It will be unnecessary for me to say, that we deeply sympathize in the miseries with which Ireland is afflicted—that we deeply sympathize with Her Majesty's concern for Ireland—and that we shall be prepared to give our calmest and best attention to any measures Her Majesty's Ministers may be prepared to bring forward as remedies for that destitution which unhappily exists. But, Sir, at the same time, we must be expected to deal frankly with the conduct of Ministers; and whilst we are not disposed to say that Ministers acted wrongly in declining to call Parliament together—not disposed to censure them for having overridden the law, and superseded the duties of the Legislature itself—we are disposed to say, that the measures to which they have had recourse are not those in which we can altogether agree. It is impossible to view the operation of their Poor Employment Act, and say that it has answered any good purpose. We are told that the effect of the administration by Her Majesty's Ministers of that Act has been, that upwards of 400,000 persons have been employed in works altogether useless, and worse than useless; we have been told by the Inspector General of Works in Ireland (Colonel Douglas), that the only effect of these works has been to obstruct the public conveyances; and that in consequence of the mode in which that Act has been administered, the people have been withdrawn from the cultivation of the fields; and it is, therefore, impossible for us to give our approbation to such employment of the people. With respect to the supply of food to the people, I, for one, cannot agree altogether in those principles of political economy which have been advanced by the right hon. Gentleman. This political economy of non-interference with the import and retail trade may be good in ordinary times; but in times such as the present, when a calamity unexampled in the history of the world has suddenly fallen upon Ireland—when there are no merchants or retailers in the whole of the west of Ireland—when a country of which the people has been accustomed to live upon potatoes of their own growth, produced within a few yards of their own doors, is suddenly deprived of this the only food of its people, it was not reasonable to suppose that suddenly merchants and retailers would spring up to supply the extraordinary demands of the people for food. Therefore, I should say, that this was a time when Her Majesty's Ministers should have broken through these harsh and severe rules of political economy, and should themselves have found the means of providing the people of Ireland with food. The right hon. Gentleman has said, that Ministers have done wisely in adhering to their decision; but I think differently from him. When every day we hear of persons being starved to death, and when the right hon. Gentleman himself admits that in many parts of the country the population has been decimated, I cannot say that I think Ministers have done all they might have done to avert the fatal consequence of this famine. I have at this moment in my pocket a letter from the Protestant clergyman of Skibbereen (the Rev. Richard Boyle Townshend), in which he says that between the 1st of December and the 1st of January there have been 140 deaths in the workhouse of that town, and that the poor starving creatures are entering the workhouse, as they themselves say, "that they may be able to die dacently under a roof, and be sure of coffins." He also states, that on the Sunday previous, in his own parish churchyard, fourteen funerals were waiting whilst the first was being completed; that in the next parish there were nine funerals at once in the churchyard; and that in two others there were six funerals at once in each. How can it be said, then, that the people have been supplied with food in the way in which it was the duty of the Government to provide, when such occurrences as these have taken place? The same rev. gentleman also states that he does not exaggerate when he said that the poor law union of Skibbereen, whose population had been 100,000 souls, had, up to the 8th of January, when he wrote, been decimated. If this, then, be true, that in one poor law union 10,000 persons, up to the 8th of January, have perished from famine, can it be said that Ministers have done all that they could have done to supply the people with food? At this moment, we know that there are between 300,000 and 400,000 quarters of corn in stock on hand in the three ports of London, Liverpool, and Glasgow. I want to know, then, what was to have prevented Ministers from sending any part or all of this food to the west of Ireland, to feed the starving population there? What would have been the effect of their so doing? It would have been the same as it was in the course of the early part of last year, when Her Majesty's late Government sent food to those parts of the country where prices had been unduly raised. It would have been the same as occurred in 1831, when the Government of Lord Grey, under my Lord Stanley, the then Secretary for Ireland, supplied the people of that country with food. It would have kept the retailers, the engrossers, and the forestallers in order, and prevented them from availing themselves of the famine to obtain undue prices. What do we see with regard to Indian meal? Why, Indian corn is at this moment selling in New York at 3*s*., and at Liverpool and in Ireland at 9*s*. per bushel. Can anybody doubt that if Ministers had interfered and supplied Ireland with food, it would have reduced the enormous profits of these retailers? I say, then, it was the duty of Ministers to have broken through their severe code of political economy, and to have supplied the west coast of Ireland with food, in order to keep down the prices of corn. Then, with regard to the mode in which Ministers have employed the people, I, for one, cannot think that the employment of the people upon roads, or any such unproductive works, was the best course they might have adopted. It was competent for them to have enabled the landlords to have employed the people upon productive works on their own estates. But the course of the right hon. Gentleman was such as necessarily to discourage the landlords from applying their money to the improvement of their estates, inasmuch as the landlord who was disposed to employ persons upon his estate in productive works, was not released from the obligation of supporting the poor of other estates, the landlords of which were not so well disposed. I come now, Sir, to the measures Her Majesty's Ministers are about to propose for the relief of the people of Ireland; and I will touch first upon the proposition to remove the 4*s*. duty upon corn. The hon. Gentleman who seconded the Address remarked that it might be said there was a compact between Parliament and the agricultural interest. I, for one, repudiate the idea of any compact between the Parliament or the late Ministry and the agricultural interest. We do claim a compact in 1842 with the late Ministry, which was broken in 1846. But we have never consented to any compromise in 1846, and we release altogether Her Majesty's Ministers and the Government from any notion that the agricultural interest considers, upon the one side, that the Government of the country is bound by any compact to them; or that they, upon the other, are bound to any compromise with the Government. It is not our intention to place any obtacle in the way of Her Majesty's Ministers in repealing that 4*s*. duty. But when we say this, we do not admit that the repeal of that 4*s*. duty will confer any benefit whatever upon the consumer. That it will be a loss to Her Majesty's Exchequer no one can doubt. But if the Chancellor of the Exchequer is prepared to say that the revenues of the country are in so prosperous a condition that he can afford to spare three or four hundred thousand pounds, it is not for us to oppose him. But it is our opinion, that every farthing of that 400,000*l*.—of that 4*s*. duty—will go into the pockets of these corn-merchants and forestallers, of whom the people of Ireland have just reason to complain; that it will go into the hands of men who, whilst they buy at 3*s*., will sell to the starving poor only at 9*s*.—that it will go into the pockets of the American merchant and American agriculturist. I said just now the price of Indian corn at New York was 3*s*. per bushel, and 9*s*. at Liverpool. Something like that applies to the price of wheat, which is 40*s*. at New York, and nearly 80*s*. at Liverpool. Who is getting the difference? Those into whose pockets will go the 4*s*. duty you are about to give up. Better by half to retain the 4*s*. duty, and give the money accruing from it to Ireland to feed the people with. With respect to the interference with our navigation laws, I do not expect to see much benefit derived from it. It is too late in the day now to assemble ships of foreign nations to send them to America; for it is from America you must get your supply. If it were proposed to make a permanent alteration in those laws—which I do not believe is intended—I should have felt it my duty to oppose any such proposition; but I understand distinctly from Her Majesty's Speech that the alteration is intended only to be temporary. But is the difficulty not to find grain, but ships to bring it? There is an opportunity of which Her Majesty's Ministers might avail themselves if they should think fit, late rather than never, to cast off their too devoted regard for the principles of political economy. There is an opportunity for them to purchase in the markets of New York, New Orleans, Boston, and Baltimore, grain at the prices I speak of, and there are eight ships of the line, measuring on the average something like 2,500 tons, and capable of carrying at least 2,000 tons of grain a-piece; and I have the authority of one of the finest seamen in the British service (the Earl of Hardwicke), that if Her Majesty's Ministers would give him the commission, in little more than twenty-four hours, he would have the guns out of all of them, batten down their ports, and caulk them up, go to the United States, and before ten weeks are over bring back 80,000 quarters of grain to the west coast of Ireland. I am aware the Government have already employed in carrying grain forty-four ships of war, measuring 27,000 tons; but when I see that although there is grain in the country, the people cannot get it, because the corn merchants in Ireland will not sell at reasonable prices; nothing appears to me so simple to remedy the evil as for Her Majesty's Ministers to employ these ships of the line, now that all danger of a rupture on account of the Montpensier marriage is over, to carry food from America to the people of Ireland. Certain it is that the 80,000 quarters of corn these ships could bring, and the four voyages they could make before harvest, making together 320,000 quarters of grain, would be a very material supply for the suffering people of that country. There is at this moment in bond and stock between 300,000 and 400,000 quarters of grain in London, Liverpool, and Glasgow, which if Her Majesty's Government pleased might in the meantime be sent, and I do not doubt would speedily reduce the price of grain, and bring it within the reach of the people. But while I make these observations I feel that Her Majesty's Ministers have been placed in very difficult circumstances, and I, for one, am not disposed to second the hon. Member for Limerick (Mr. Smith O'Brien) in any impeachment.

I now pass on to the other matters treated of in Her Majesty's Speech. With respect to the foreign policy of the noble Lord opposite, I am sure that it is matter of great regret with the country at large, that the result of it should be that we have already become on bad terms with the King of the French. I think that the policy which this country most desires to see maintained, is that of a good understanding with the King of the French; and although I am glad to find that the noble Lord has not protested against the Montpensier marriage, and has softened down the correspondence we have seen in the newspapers, and no longer holds the Treaty of Utrecht as a bar to that marriage, I cannot but express my deep regret that anything has occurred between the Governments of England and France to produce bad feelings between the Monarchs and people of the two countries. I do not believe the people of England take any interest in this Montpensier marriage, or sympathize at all with Her Majesty's Ministers. The commercial part of this nation would have been far better pleased had the noble Lord the Secretary for Foreign Affairs directed his attention to the Spanish carrying trade rather than to the Spanish marriages. I come next to the paragraph in the Speech which states that there has been " a manifest violation of the Treaty of Vienna." Sir, that is a grave charge to make against the three most powerful Sovereigns of Europe—against those three Sovereigns, with whose predecessors, if not with themselves, we fought but a few years back the great battle of European liberty. I am at a loss to understand how it is we can see a manifest violation of the Treaty of Vienna in the infraction not of one of its fundamental articles, but of one out of seventeen supplementary articles, which the Ministers of this country have never signed in chief. If the incorporation of Cracow with the dominions of Austria be a manifest violation of the Treaty of Vienna, I wish to ask how many violations of the Treaty of Vienna had taken place before? I know we were signatory witnesses to these articles when they were incorporated with the Treaty of Vienna; but as to the infractions of that treaty, I should like to ask what was the severance of Belgium from Holland? If this be an infraction of the Treaty of Vienna, what was it when this country joined with France to produce that separation, and sent her line of battle ships to blockade the Scheldt, while France cannonaded the walls of Antwerp? I, therefore, deeply regret that my noble Friend has thought it his duty to express in the Speech from the Throne, in such strong language, condemnation of three of our old and most powerful allies, the natural friends of this country. It is not for me now to enter more into the merits of the case; but, for one, I cannot so deeply sympathize with the people of Cracow. I believe if the truth were known, the people of Cracow themselves, at least the well-disposed and loyal, and those who wish for peace, are greatly delighted at this incorporation with a powerful monarchy. Hon. Gentlemen may smile, but I believe it will prove greatly for the advantage of that country, which now for sixteen years has been in a state of continual distraction. It cannot be denied, however the press of foreign countries may write against the incorporation, that the announcement of it was received with universal acclamations by the people, and a general illumination of the city of Cracow. With respect to the other topics in Her Majesty's Speech, it is not necessary for me to say much on the present occasion. We must wait to see the measures to be propounded by Her Majesty's Ministers, and I trust that they will be found to be upon a scale adequate to the necessities of the case—adequate to the calamity which is threatening the destitute people of Ireland. I am reminded that I have not observed upon the intention of Her Majesty's Ministers to admit sugar into distilleries and breweries. My Friends do not intend to oppose that proposition. We do not expect that any great good will be derived from that measure; for if you intend to make use of sugar instead of barley, you will, whilst you are reducing the price of barley, raise the price of sugar; so that in the balance the people of this country will lose as much as they will gain; and I do not expect that you will succeed in again driving back the people of England to barley bread as their food, and that, I presume, is the intention of Her Majesty's Ministers. [" No, no!"] But with respect to the other measures proposed by Her Majesty's Ministers which have not yet been propounded, all I will say is, that I trust they will be measures of such a description as will encourage the employment of capital in Ireland. It is not by grants and by gifts, and additional taxes upon the people of this country, that the permanent interests of Ireland can be promoted. Her Majesty's Ministers must propound some large measures by which enterprise shall be encouraged in Ireland; some great measure by which English capital may be induced to pour itself into Ireland. I hope the measures of Her Majesty's Ministers will be such as, without any interference from my Friends, will attain that object. I know nothing as to what they may be; but if Her Majesty's Ministers should not bring forward some comprehensive measures of this kind, I give notice to the House that at the earliest opportunity I shall, with the advice of my party, bring forward a large comprehensive measure for this purpose. With reference to what the right hon. Gentleman the Chief Secretary for Ireland has said, that he trusts that Parliament will look upon the present calamity of Scotland and Ireland as an imperial calamity, to which the people of this country are bound to lend their aid to remove it as much as lies in their power, I heartily concur. Her Majesty's Ministers shall have our support in assisting the landlords of Ireland in paying the costs of this extraordinary calamity. Whatever we may read in the public press, I cannot believe that it is the feeling of the English people in general that the properties of Irish landlords alone should be confiscated in order to pay the cost of feeding the people, under circumstances so extraordinary as those which mark the present crisis. Therefore if Ministers should propose that this country shall pay its due share of the cost of the *un*profitable employment of the Irish people during the present winter, they will, I believe, have our assistance and support. But at the same time let it be clearly understood that we do think that for the future Irish property of one description or another is bound to maintain the Irish poor. This we look upon as being for the general good, when hereafter Irish landlords shall have been left to their own resources. But we do think that it is a hard case for Parliament to step in, or for Government to step in and say, "You shall employ two millions of people as we order you—you shall feed the people in a way which can return you no profit; you shall supply the people in a way which, so far from adding to the means of the country for the future, will, I fear, be the cause of preventing its cultivation and thus creating another famine;" and then turn round on Irish landlords, and saddle them with such a monstrous expenditure, saying to them, "You are responsible for all this; it was your duty to find employment for your own people, and you alone unaided by us must pay the entire cost."

Mr. ROEBUCK should not, had he consulted his personal feelings, have risen to address the House on the present occasion. But not having heard, and for the moment not wishing to hear, what Her Majesty's Government intended to do for Ireland; he desired, in a few words, to state what he believed to be for the general good in the present condition of the two countries. He was quite prepared to credit all the miseries described as existing at present in Ireland; in those miseries he deeply sympathized, and if it were in the power of any one man to say they should cease, there was nothing he should not be willing to do to obtain the people's release from them. But a Government had to attend to other considerations; a Government had to consider what came within its legitimate functions—a Government had to ask itself the difference between a temporary and a permanent application of a law, and it had to consider whether the present condition of the country should be regarded as merely temporary, or regarded as likely to become a permanent one. Not having heard any explanation on this point from the noble Lord and his Colleagues, he rose to warn him against the danger of allowing that which should be a mere temporary expedient to be a permanent mischief for this country. He knew what sympathies might be appealed to; he knew what it was to come a-begging for Ireland. Yes, he expressed it in those terms; and before he had done he would illustrate the expression by very many examples. When the right hon. Gentleman who now sat opposite (Sir R. Peel) prepared last year against the coming evil, he expected what would follow; but he was quite prepared, he might say parenthetically, to pay his meed of admiration to the right hon. Gentleman for the foresight he then displayed of what was about to happen; and, though the misery then was not so great as he anticipated, yet amid all the misery of the present year the right hon. Gentleman must derive some satisfaction from the memory of the measures he then proposed. But there was then this inconvenience in those measures, that they were likely to lead to the mischief he had anticipated. Why? Because no Government can propose to itself to furnish the food of a people. He laid that down as an axiom from which no wise statesman would ever deviate. Pressing circumstances might arise calling for some extraordinary expedient; but no Government could by any possibility feed a people; and it was a legitimate consequence of all that cant they had seen in every newspaper in this country and Ireland, that they were now told the people had a right to be supplied with labour and provisions. He denied both propositions. No Government could constantly provide labour for a people; no Government could pretend constantly to pay wages to a people. They had, to be sure, one example in history—the aristocracy of Rome paid the Romans; but what the consequences were they well knew. And, as certain as the sun would rise to-morrow, if the Government attempted to pay the people of Ireland, all the misery, depravity, and wretchedness of ancient Rome would be a mere nothing—a mere speck on the horizon, compared to the direful calamities that would befall this country. He knew the difficulties of the case; he knew the charges he should expose himself to. He knew the obloquy to which he should be exposed by expressing these opinions; but as a duty to the people of England, whom he represented on this occasion, he was prepared to meet all this obloquy, and to say the people of Ireland should not be paid at the expense of the people of England and Scotland. Were it for one year, or for any given and specified time, he would lay down all he possessed to pay the people of Ireland for that period. Last year the right hon. Gentleman anticipated a famine; it did not come; but this year it had come; and it had come aggravated by the knowledge that England would provide for every bawling demagogue who wanted to exacerbate the miseries of his country. Well, England came forward then—she has come forward now—and the Parliament of England was prepared to make any possible sacrifice of a temporary nature; but he protested against voting a permanent provision for the Irish people. A word now about Irish landlords. He had no doubt the term would excite some sort of feeling. He did not mean an Irish landlord who had become one on a sudden—he meant the Irish landlord for whom the British Parliament had been legislating for the last three centuries; and during that time, they had been legislated for, as a body, against the people of Ireland. They had wrought always for their own personal purpose, unmindful of the wants of the people of Ireland. And let him explain in a few words how this had been done. When an Irish landlord came into possession of an estate, he built cottages here and there, intending, by letting them, to obtain what to him was a very necessary extra percentage. He built those cottages for the pauper population, continuing the characteristics of that population. Were there a poor law in Ireland he dare not do this. Some Irish landlords would perhaps deny this; but he would affirm that they had in this way ministered to the desire of the people to possess land, and that they had on their estates a pauper population, for whom they had done nothing beneficial, because they had been legislated for and supported in all sorts of privileges by the House of Commons. Acts of Parliament had been carried for them; of those Acts the landlords had taken advantage, and by them the people of Ireland were reduced to a state of pauperism, universal and extreme. And now, after all this, the Irish landlords came to England to maintain, not only them, but the paupers also, whose condition was the result of their neglect. Such a proposition was adverse to the feelings and the common sense of the people of England, and as an English representative he declared his opinion that it was the duty of the Imperial Government to insist that the land of Ireland should maintain the people of Ireland. He was prepared to vote for, and, if the Government should propose, with all his humble endeavours to support, any measure, or series of measures, having for their object the bringing about of the fullest and most perfect equality of rights and law for the Irish people. The definite line for a Government was to maintain the security of life and property; a Government could not go beyond that, either to feed the people, to increase profits, or to make the earth fertile; but a Government could keep peace in a country, and he was prepared to go any length to preserve peace in Ireland. And if the House of Commons should be prepared, with that view, to give to the people of Ireland an equality in freedom which should leave no room for cavil, then he would say, give them power to govern themselves, to legislate as a distinct people for themselves; but let them, further, then maintain themselves. For so much was he prepared; and he would explain to the Irish landlords how he would act as regarded Ireland. They, in that House, were about to renew the English Poor Law; and he believed there was a section in the Act which said that its operation should extend to so much of Great Britain and Ireland as was called England and Wales. Now, he wanted to add the words, "and Ireland." He wanted nothing more—not another syllable. That was all he would ask, and he would be content if that were granted. They should have that Act of Elizabeth, which had been so much talked of and praised, extended to Ireland, and then, at least in that respect, there would be an equality between the two countries. Let perfect equality, in every other sense, be compelled, and if that was also demanded, let the number of representatives of Ireland in that House be increased; even of that result he had no dread. Then, to obtain this equality, let them go still further; let there be the same taxation in amount, if not in manner; and after they had done away with the reservation in the Act of Parliament which applied now only to England and Wales, they would have taken some steps to settle accounts with the landlords of Ireland. To all this he would agree; but he was not prepared to vote for any measures which taxed the hard-working, sober, industrious, peace-loving, law-obedient people of England, merely for the purpose of perpetuating that huge and antique anarchy which he saw prevalent in what, by a wonderful misapplication of terms, was called "the sister kingdom." He had heard it stated within the last few days, by one who called himself the representative of Ireland, that all the measures of relief dictated by the earnest sympathy and overflowing benevolence of the people of England had proceeded from an intention on the part of the English Government to buy Protestants in Ireland. He had never so clearly perceived and felt the inferiority of one man who had been pushed into consideration by the pressure of extraneous circumstances as during the last six months. Ireland had wanted a man, and, unfortunately, Ireland found no man for her purpose. She had not possessed a man who could forego personal interests, and resign personal pelf, and in that hour of danger merge himself in the people of Ireland. Such a man, so called for, she had not met with; but, in his place, a man was found to exacerbate all the evils in existence—who could create, if he did not find them, and if he found them could exaggerate all the prejudices which ignorance of each other only had produced, in order to separate the two countries of England and Ireland. Was such a man to be accepted there as a representative of the people of Ireland? No, certainly not; he believed the people of Ireland to be a great and an honest people; and he could not think that their sentiments were the sentiments of the man he had spoken of. If such men were the representatives, in fact as well as in name, of the Irish people, why had they not come forward to inform that House of their intentions for the future, and what were the bases on which they desired hereafter to legislate? Surely there was to be some change, some variation in the mode of dealing with distress on the other side of the Channel. As had been said last Session, when relief was granted, was this to last for ever? Were the existence and prosperity of 8,000,000 of people to be always dependent on a favourable potato crop? Was it to be said, when Providence visited the land with a fatal disease in vegetables, that the 8,000,000 Irish should come crawling as beggars to the shores of England? Should not that people, or the representatives of that people, indicate, in such circumstances some respect for themselves—should they not develop some energy, and prove that they had some power within themselves to maintain themselves? If they were really "a people," wishing for distinct nationality, was there not some man among them who would raise the standard of Irish independence in the simple way of ceasing to be a mendicant? If that climax were achieved, they would have succeeded in doing much for Ireland. They would have taught Irishmen to depend on Ireland. There was danger to Ireland in the constant cry for sympathy to England; and if it were not for the too near neighbourhood of England, Ireland—instead of having 8,000,000 of people living in a chronic state of famine—for now it was only an acute form of the old disease—would be, comparatively with England, prosperous. England had been to Ireland what the benevolent lady was in the parish. She was always there to apply to, and she created pauperism around her. The English had been industrious and successful, he allowed, but out of their overflowing they had fed the people of Ireland. But this could not go on for ever; they must be ready for a casualty; but to maintain, at any time, 8,000,000 of people he held to be totally impossible. As a practical man he drew a conclusion, which he desired to press upon the noble Lord (Lord J. Russell) below where he sat, and he desired to press upon the attention of Her Majesty's Ministers, the futility of any attempt, by Government regulation, to feed the entire population of a country. The main-spring of life—the jackweight of the social clock—was private interest, personal consideration; if you took that away you dislocated the whole social system, and you had no right to expect the machine to go on. He warned the noble Lord, at this present juncture, not to give in to any trifling emergency. He was well aware of the noble Lord's civil valour—the only peculiarity of the noble Lord to which he paid great deference, and for which he acknowledged admiration—and he did hope the noble Lord would resist the clamour of his Irish supporters, and remember that he had to legislate, not for Ireland alone, but for three kingdoms. He trusted to the noble Lord to conquer the emergency, and to establish the great, leading principle—that a people, to be maintained, must maintain themselves. If they once departed from that principle, there was no end to the misery they would engender; if they disavowed that principle in regard to Ireland, they must resign the application of it in England. If they once deviated from that rule, there was no end to the misery which they created—no end to the dreadful calamities they prepared, because, he told them, that every pauper in every parish in this country had a right to say—"You feed the Irish people, feed me." And this was but common reason. How were they to prevent it? Were they to permit Irish landlords to be continually coming to them with accounts of the misery of Ireland, and supplicating relief? He knew how he should be met. Hon. Gentlemen would state particular instances of misery. They would hear in one case of so many women dying—in another of grown men starving—in another of children perishing for want—all, no doubt, well calculated to excite our commiseration. He admitted it all—he knew it all. Apart from the consideration of there having been a dire visitation from Providence, against whose decrees we could not murmur, he must attribute the consequences which had followed from that visitation to the Irish landlords. [Mr. GRATTAN: What do you say of the English Parliament?] He admitted that the landlords had been backed by the English Parliament. But how? By assisting the power of the Irish landlords as contradistinguished from the great body of the people of Ireland. But he called upon the Legislature of Great Britain, when making laws for Ireland, to place them in precisely the same position as the people of England. Let them give to Ireland an English poor law, and see what the landlords would say to that. He would show what would ensue from the adoption of the new system. The Irish landlords at the present moment were nominally the landlords of Ireland; but that was a mistake. Their estates were extensively mortgaged, and the mortgagees, not the mortgagors, were the real proprietors of the soil. Give an English poor law to Ireland, and place the landlords there on an equality with the landlords at home, and the consequence would be, in nine cases out of ten, that the nominal Irish landlord would be swept away; the mortgagor would give place to the mortgagee, and the latter would have to admit all the responsibilities and perform all the duties of a landed proprietor. The English labourer supported himself and his family on 9*s.* a week; and why should the Irish landlord come here and ask us to maintain the Irish poor in addition to our own? He had heard it whispered, indeed, that if we did anything that could have the effect of removing the Irish landlords, we should rob the country of all the elegance, all the luxury, of all that usually characterizes a civilized State? His reply was, that he desired to see a happy state—a state of plenty and content. He did not see that the Irish landlord, as he now stood, contributed to such a condition of the people; and in the cases where he did so, he could maintain those who, by position, depended upon him. That was all he wished to say with reference to the propositions to be brought forward by the noble Lord for the alleviation of the distress in Ireland. As to any temporary expedient for opening the ports, he was perfectly prepared to vote for its adoption; he rather thought that that course should have been taken two months ago — not that he considered it would do any good, that was to say, any great good—not because the matter was in itself momentous, but because he would not hesitate, in any shape, to express his sympathy in the misfortune afflicting Ireland. He could not anticipate that provisions, such a measure being accepted, would flow in more freely, or that if they did they would be more easily obtainable by those for whose requirements they were intended; he believed, after an examination of the state of Europe, that there was no more corn, in any of the ordinary markets, to export; if there had been, France would have got it, and if the measure were good for anything, it would have been two months ago, when we might have come into direct competition with France. He knew that much was expected from the supplies in America, but he had good reason for supposing that, in the present state of the American corn market, they were in effect shut out. Next year they might have a large exportation from America, but not, he believed, until then; and, therefore, though prepared for the suggestion of the noble Lord, it was with the conviction that the expedient would prove of little or no avail. He did not suppose either that anything important would be gained by granting permission to those concerned to use sugar in breweries and distilleries; if he gave his approval, it was not because it should be done now, but because it should be done at all times. He thought the traders were the best judges of all such measures, and therefore he would support any measure which gave them liberty to act as they liked. All this was good, so far as it went, but he regretted he had not had the opportunity of expressing an opinion of "the great and comprehensive measure," as it was termed, which had been announced by the noble Lord (Lord G. Bentinck) opposite. His attention had been aroused, and his curiosity had been excited to discover the meaning of the noble Lord's hint. He had waited to find in the noble Lord a regenerator of his country and time, as he was of his party. He had relied upon obtaining from the noble Lord some grand panacea for all evils, something, in a word, that should astonish them like gun-cotton. But a cruel deception had been practised upon him; he had heard nothing of the scheme more than its title. The noble Lord had talked of himself as the leader of his party, had spoken of "our intentions," and what "we" would support, of "our" resolves on this and on that, but nothing was proposed, though everything was promised, and no one could form an idea as to the nature of the measure, or could comprehend its comprehensiveness. It was an easy thing to criticise, but in this case there was no field for criticism, and that was annoying. He (Mr. Roebuck) would recommend to the noble Lord the next time he placed himself at the head of a party and criticised the schemes of others, to let those others know what were his measures, and what, were the noble Lord Chancellor of the Exchequer, he would do. The party of the noble Lord had indeed disappointed him; he had waited for many to arise from whom much was expected; he had looked for great things, and he had never been more deluded. There had been nothing in all that intensity of extraordinary gesticulation and wonderful emphasis; there was nothing apparent in the exhibition but a dislike to somebody that was not named, and who could not and would not be liked under present circumstances. Had there been suggested any measure tending to the benefit of the people of Ireland, he would have given to it anxious consideration. The noble Lord led a party in that House—not very powerful, but still a party—and, as it aspired to the reputation of being an intellectual party, it would only have been satisfying the claims upon them to have proposed something. Perhaps the deficiencies of the noble Lord would be remedied by his second, and the House would then have an opportunity of forming an estimate of the comprehensive measure which the future was to disclose. The noble Lord might think, that as he (Mr. Roebuck) was equally wanting in bringing forward any substantial scheme, he was unfitted to censure the course which had been taken; but he (Mr. Roebuck) had never spoken of "our" resolves, he had never been one of a Government, and never expected to be one of a Government; he had no expectation of being in the place of the noble Lord (Lord J. Russell), and that made all the difference between him and the noble Lord (Lord G. Bentinck) opposite. A right hon. Baronet, when having similar expectations, used to say, in speaking, that he had not yet been called in, and though the noble Lord was quite ready to be the state physician, he had not yet been called in; and, if he might prophecy, the noble Lord was not likely to be called in. If the Irish people had so little to expect from an expectant statesman, they would, he thought, be more inclined to place their trust in the noble Lord (Lord J. Russell) or in the right hon. Baronet (Sir R. Peel)—rather in the established parties of the country than in the minute section led by the noble Lord opposite. And he sincerely hoped that in the combination of the exertions of those two great parties there would be no ministering to that mischievous belief on the part of the Irish people that the Government was bound to maintain them. If the prosperity of the country were not left to the instigation of private interests and private enterprise, Ireland would continue to be what she had been for centuries—the curse of the empire, torn by the violence of her party dissensions, and weakened by the unending poverty of her population. Let it be forgotten that the Channel was between England and Ireland, and let there exist in both countries the most absolute equality of rights and privileges. He could not sit down without saying one word in reference to our foreign relations; and he would do so in anticipation of what might take place hereafter on this subject. In the present state of this country, if they had reference to no other, to be at peace with all the world was of the greatest moment to the people of England, as well as to the nations of the world at large. He hoped they were coming to a full understanding of the blessings of peace, and a full understanding also of the mischief which that man would effect, who, for any idle purpose, should disturb the peace of the world. Her Majesty's Speech referred to the late transactions in Spain—to the marriage of two young ladies, one the Queen of that country, and the other the Infanta. He thought that with that, as English politicians, they had little to do. They had a right to assume that other nations felt as they would feel themselves on such a matter; and that, as the people of this country would not permit any interference with their own royal marriages, so they would not interfere with other nations. He did hope that these transactions would end with the correspondence that had taken place; but he called the attention of the noble Lord the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs to one or two circumstances which must have been caused by his misreading the Treaty of Utrecht. He passed by all the statements respecting what was alleged to have taken place in the Chateau d'Eu. They had nothing to do with the Chateau d'Eu, or to the statement of what had been agreed upon between two illustrious Personages there, but with what had happened between the Ministers of the two countries. He, however, could not help observing that much mischief would ensue, if any Minister of England permitted any correspondence between royal personages to interfere with the national concerns. This observation, it might be said, could not apply to the present Ministry; but he said, without reference to any particular Cabinet, that no Minister ought to allow others to take a part, or permit any personal correspondence to influence him in such a matter. And the sooner constitutional sovereigns were told and taught that such a principle was the rule and pride of constitutional governments, the better. He made these allusions with all respect to the parties to whom he referred, and he was now speaking his sentiments as a monarchical politician, having in view the interests of a constitutional government. He found it stated in a newspaper, that the noble Lord the Foreign Secretary had taken such umbrage at the marriage of the Infanta of Spain, that he had entered his protest against the power of inheritance on the part of the children of the Infanta to the throne of Spain. Now, he did not care whether the noble Lord had been outwitted, or not, by the King of the French or M. Guizot. He thought he had, and that was the reason for his showing some ill temper in the matter. But the noble Lord's despatches were not what might have been expected from a practised hand: they seemed a jumble altogether; a rough undigested mass of compilation, which ought not to have emanated from a writer who was placed in the high position of Foreign Minister of this country. At the same time, he did not speak as a critic. A critic of the facts he was, undoubtedly; but he would not now speak as a critic of the noble Lord's style. It was very bad, no doubt; but he would pass it by with that remark. The noble Lord, as he had stated, being beaten in diplomacy, protested against the legality of the inheritance of the Infanta's children to the throne of Spain. Now, could anything be more unwise than for the noble Lord to enter such a protest? What had this country to do with the succession to the throne of Spain, or to the question whether the Queen of Spain might be fruitful or not? To say that the issue of this or that marriage should or should not be heirs to the throne of Spain, was surely beyond the limits of the noble Lord's official duties as Foreign Secretary of this country. Could France or Spain interfere with respect to the succession to the throne of England? France did so interfere under Louis XIV., and, as a constitutional government and people, they rose as one man against such an attempt. He wanted to know the authority for the noble Lord's interference. He quoted the peace of Utrecht. Did he ever read the treaty made after that peace? By that treaty Louis XIV., for himself and his descendants renounced all right to the throne of Spain. Why, the French ambassador at that time told Lord Bolingbroke that he demanded an invalid security when he insisted upon such a clause in the treaty; that the renunciation he required would be invalidated by the municipal law of Spain and France. Bolingbroke said, "Never mind about that; give us the renunciation." "Take it," said the French ambassador, M. de Torcy, "with the understanding that the renunciation of these two parties cannot bind their successors." The noble Lord, when he declared that the children of the Duke de Montpensier should not succeed to the throne of Spain, had forgotten that maxim of political as well as social life, "Sufficient for the day is the evil thereof." He was sowing broadcast the seeds of war, and doing his utmost to create dissension between the Powers of Europe. As a wise, patriotic, and benevolent statesman, the noble Lord would not have anticipated and sown the seeds of future dissension, which might rise up in the shape of war at any time when it might be most unwished for. Now, he would ask that House, as men of common sense, whether it would not have been better that the noble Lord should have foregone his little pique at being outdone in negotiation, and said, "The matter shall go no further?" But no, the noble Lord wreaked the vengeance he felt against M. Guizot, upon the unborn children of the Infanta. He maintained, in opposition to the noble Lord, that the Treaty of Utrecht was not now binding on any Government of Europe; and that the marriage of the Duke de Montpensier did not touch any existing treaty. The peace of Utrecht was made for the purpose of preventing the two crowns of France and Spain from coming upon one head; but the political face of Europe was then very different from what it was at present. There were then an Emperor of Germany and the States of Holland; but no King of Bavaria, or Emperor of Austria; no King of the Belgians, or King of the French. The relations of all the parties to that treaty had been altered; and wars had followed which had altogether destroyed it. Writers on international law had laid it down that war annulled a treaty, and that it was necessary distinctly to recognise and renew that treaty in subsequent treaties, without which it ceased to be of any effect. What subsequent treaty, he wished to know, revived the Treaty of Utrecht? That treaty provided that if the two crowns devolved upon one person, that person was to renounce one of them. Louis XIV.'s immediate descendant married an Infanta of Spain; and M. Guizot mentioned two or three other cases in which similar alliances had been contracted. To protest against the issue of such a marriage coming to the throne was mere mischievous interference. It was an idle exhibition of something like disappointed vanity; and he trusted the Parliament of England would disown such a vile exhibition of personal mortification. He would conclude by repeating his hope that the noble Lord at the head of the Government would insist on the Irish being maintained out of the resources of Ireland; and that the Foreign Secretary would do the people of this country the ineffable benefit of being quiet in his office and guarding them against war.

Mr. H. GRATTAN observed, with regard to the speech of the hon. and learned Gentleman who had just sat down, that acid poured on the best tempered weapon caused it to lose its lustre; and the remarks of the hon. and learned Gentleman as to the Irish people were certainly not remarkable either for their brilliancy or novelty. The hon. and learned Gentleman, in referring to Ireland, had been interrupted by the hon. Gentleman who sat near him (Mr. B. Osborne), who coming lately from Tipperary appeared to bring with him some instrument not unfamiliar in that locality, for the moment the hon. and learned Gentleman caught his eye he appeared as if touched by the spear of Ithuriel, and

"Shook from his horrid hair pestilence and war."

The hon. and learned Gentleman spoke in contemptuous terms of the Irish as beggars. Did it ever occur to him that Irish money had been expended in building Buckingham Palace? Did he know there was annually drawn from Ireland a large sum to beautify this metropolis? That such mansions as those of Hertford, Lansdowne, and Devonshire had been built from Irish estates? Did he forget that this country destroyed the manufactures of Ireland, and seized on the five millions of her revenue? If the Irish were beggars, the hon. and learned Gentleman must be satisfied with the alternative that his own countrymen were the cause of it. As the right hon. Secretary for Ireland admitted—the Irish were entitled to ask for assistance as a matter of justice, and not of charity. Great stress had been laid on the danger of this country being brought to feed the Irish people. But, as a member of the relief committee, he could announce that 11,000*l.* was the sum received from England in Ireland. The hon. Member for Bath talked about history and the King of the French; but there was one thing he omitted to say—he did not tell the House that the King of the French declared he had sent abroad for corn to feed his people, and that he had procured corn for that purpose. Was the hon. Member aware that when the French and Italians had between fifty and sixty vessels at Odessa, in which they carried away 250,000 quarters of wheat, there were only six British vessels at the same port, which were freighted with the corn that the King of the French had left there? The landlords of Ireland had been calumniated by the hon. Member, as if they were the cause of the calamities of Ireland; but they had done every thing in their power to relieve the people. They had sold their cattle and their horses in order that the consumption of corn might be diminished, and they had reduced the quantity of food for these horses which they kept. Hon. Members might laugh at this; but they could not be aware of the amount of grain consumed in this way if they undervalued the fact. When the right hon. Gentleman the Secretary for Ireland spoke of the use of sugar and molasses in breweries, he did not say there would be any prohibition of grain in those establishments. It was an object of importance that distillation from grain should be stopped. In Mr. Roe's distillery 1,000 barrels of oats were consumed every day. These would go a great way in feeding the people. The hon. Member for Bath attacked the Irish landlords in a most shameful manner. Had they made no sacrifices? Had they not sacrificed their political animosities? Had they not sacrificed their party antipathy and their religious differences? They had cast aside all their former feelings, and had met in that House to support their country, under circumstances of unparalleled misery and distress, and to put an end to a system of public labour which completely demoralized it. In pursuit of these objects, they would agree in avoiding the advice and the example of the hon. Member for Bath. It had been said, that great occasions required great minds. He thought the present occasion had found Her Majesty's Government wanting. They had the heart but not the head for a calamity like that which existed in Ireland. When the people were starving, the Government told them they must die by the rules of political economy; but he, in such a case, would fling political economy to the winds. It was not that he wanted. He asked for food. If they talked to him in that strain, he said, "Give me back my legions. Give me my money. Give me my wealth. Restore me my absentee landlords, and then do as you please with your economy." The conduct of England had been different on former occasions. In 1822, no less than 500,000*l.* had passed through the hands of the committee to relieve the people. Instead of contenting themselves with such measures as they had devised, Her Majesty's Government should have sent the experimental squadron to convey food to Ireland. They should have sent 1,700 vessels of 500 tons each to Smyrna and New York for grain. The American papers stated that there were 300,000,000 bushels of Indian corn ready for shipment, and which could come into the market if vessels were ready at New York to meet the supply. If Government had taken these ships they would have saved the lives of many people. At this moment they were dying by wholesale. He held a paper in his hand, by which it appeared that at an inquest in Cork six deaths were reported, at another in Mayo five deaths, and a third in the same county six more, and at another in the Queen's county, seven. The assistant barrister for Waterford declared to him that the faces of the people appeared to him as if they had been taken out of their graves, and that the whole population, men, women, and children, looked as if they had been just unburied. The understanding between parties in that House, that the 4*s.* duty on wheat should be repealed, and that the navigation laws should be suspended, was not enough for the people of Ireland. The Labour-rate Act had demoralized the people, and was destroying the country. The public works were ruinous, and they had actually shut up his own house in the country, not far from Dublin, so that he could not get to the door. The people would not work hereafter as they had been accustomed. The public works would unfit them for agriculture. They would say to the farmers, "I'll work for you as I did for the Queen;" but that would not do for tilling the land. The Government must provide against this demoralization, and not follow the dogmas of political economists, who gave different opinions to different parties, and advised the Tories in the beginning of 1846 one way, and the Whigs at the end of 1846 in another. The gentlemen of the Commissariat were imbued with these doctrines too; they had become political economists, instead of being Her Majesty's purveyors. They had not given the people bread, but they had treated them, if not with stones, at least with fine quotations scriptural and temporal. Sir Randolph Routh at one time declared that depôts should be established to keep down the price of food, and bring it close to the doors of the poor; but that same gentleman, in answer to Lord Sligo, denied that doctrine, and said that the Government must not establish depôts, or interfere with the prices. And what was the consequence? Meal was 3*s.* 8*d.* and 3*s.* 6*d.* a stone, while wages were at the old level. It had been proved that in Mayo the labourers received but 4*d.* a day; and it was evident that no man could maintain his family on that sum, when a stone of meal, for which he would have to pay 3*s.* 6*d.*, would only support them for a day and a half. In Kildare, the committee of which he was a member, sold meat to the people at 1*s.* 8*d.* a stone, paying the difference—bad landlords as they were said to be—out of their own pockets. It was evident that the present state of things would not do, and he submitted that the First Lord of the Treasury should send 100,000*l.* to the west of Ireland at once. Not twenty-four hours should be lost in doing so. The Irish Members did not come here to beg, but to ask for their right. They asked for a portion of their money to be expended to feed them, and they did not ask Government to send fifty-seven military officers, majors, captains, and ensigns, to distribute meal to those unfortunate wretches. He thought it rather ominous that these gentlemen should be sent on such a mission. The Irish Members had banded themselves together, not to try if the Government were made of squeezable materials, but to get justice and food. He never would believe that the people of England were hostile to the just demands of the people of Ireland. They demanded a union of heart and sentiment, not a union of parchment. They were united in no factious opposition to Government, but in watchfulness for the interests of their country.

MR. DILLON BROWNE said, he should not have addressed the House, if it had not been that the hon. Member for Bath had taken occasion, in his usual fashion, to void the acerbity of his waspish and dyspeptic disposition, by stating that Ireland was a curse to this country. He trusted that that expression would not be responded to by hon. Members of that House. He trusted that it would not go forth to the people of Ireland, under their present circumstances of extraordinary affliction and distress, that this expression, so calculated to give them pain, met with the approbation of that House. But the hon. Member for Bath had also reproached them with being beggars. If they were beggars, they had been reduced to their present condition in consequence of the evil government of their country by the British Legislature; and if they would restore to the people of Ireland their native Legislature—if they would restore them those funds which they had contributed to the national debt — they would be prepared not only to provide for the present contingency, but also to legislate for the future well-being of the country. He trusted that the party headed by the noble Lord at the head of the Government—he trusted that the party so ably led by the noble Lord opposite—he trusted that the party which supported the right hon. Baronet opposite, would not join in the sentiment that Ireland was a curse to the empire. If they did, the people of Ireland would be justified in taking any steps, however dangerous they might be, which would place them in a position of independence and of separation from a country and a Parliament which entertained such degrading opinions respecting them. The hon. Member for Limerick, who might be said to have opened this debate, had made many remarks with which he had cordially concurred. But he must dissent from one remark which the hon. Member had made, that it would have been better if Her Majesty's Government had called Parliament together, than to have issued a proclamation altering the Labour-rate Act. By doing that act, he thought the Government deserved, to a certain extent, the gratitude of the people of Ireland; they had incurred great responsibility by the act, which rendered it necessary that they should now seek an indemnity from Parliament. If they had called Parliament together, questions might have arisen which might have prevented the thing from being done at last with that promptitude which was necessary to meet the emergency. With respect to the non-interference of Government with private speculation in Ireland, he felt confident, after the declarations made at the end of last Session, that it would have been dangerous to do so. The present sufferings might perhaps have been relieved by Government interference, but a fearful amount of evil would have been afterwards created. Extensive orders for food had been given to

America by private speculators; and if Government had gone into the market, the private speculators would have gone with their cargoes into the other markets of Europe; and thus, though a temporary relief might have been created for the few months now passed, yet he felt confident that greater misery would thereby have been created after Christmas; for the private supplies would have been carried to other countries, and the Government would come to a deficient market. There was no analogy between the state of matters last year and the present. The failure of last year was only partial, and confined to potatoes; this year the whole potato crop had been destroyed, not only in Ireland, but also in England. There was a famine in many parts of Europe; so that it was comparatively easy for the Government to interfere last year, though not in the present. Then, again, he would ask whether the vast mercantile resources of England were not more competent to provide a supply of food for the people than that fractional portion of their resources which was raised from the taxes? He believed that the landlords of Ireland had not fulfilled their duty, and that they were only stimulated to present exertion by an apprehension that they themselves would be buried in the universal ruin. He thought the landed gentry were called upon to come forward in the most strenuous manner to assist the Government of England in their endeavours to place Ireland beyond the recurrence of such a calamity as that with which it was now visited. Temporary relief would be of little avail. Something permanent must be done for that country. The landed gentry must endeavour to create employment for the people, and must employ their vast capital derived from rentals in encouraging enterprise and industry. As a means of recalling Irish landlords to a sense of their duty, he thought the first Act passed by the British Parliament should be to give to every one of their tenants an absolute title to relief under an extended system of poor laws. This was the most constitutional way of taxing the property of the country for the benefit of the people of the country. He felt confident that if Parliament evinced a disposition to legislate for the people of Ireland as they did for those of England and Scotland, they would have, as the reward of their labours, the establishment of social order in Ireland, and the advancement of that country to such a position that no one would dare to say "she is a curse."

MR. BERNAL OSBORNE did not know whether the circumstance of his being an Irish landlord would have any effect in inducing the House to listen to him, after the attack which had been made upon that body by the hon. Member for Bath. He would leave the speech which had been delivered by that hon. Gentleman to the hon. Member for Mayo; but as his hon. Friend (Mr. Grattan) had made an allusion to Ithuriel's spear, he would beg the Government not to follow the hon. Gentleman's (Mr. Roebuck's) advice; for if they did he would certainly turn out to be the toad in the ear of Eve. He considered that the attack, or attack by implication, made by the hon. Gentleman who had spoken last on the Irish landlords—for though the hon. Gentleman repudiated the language of the hon. Member for Bath, he followed it up by a sweeping attack as to neglect of duties—was not warranted. [Mr. DILLON BROWNE had not spoken of the present, but of the past.] But surely they were not to go back to the old forty-shilling question; for this generation, at least, Irish landlords had been an improving class. If the hon. Gentleman chose to move for a return of the number of duels fought, of crops of grain or turnips raised, or iron ploughs used, in the various counties within specified periods, he would find that the Irish landlords of the present day were an improving class. Looking to certain passages in the Speech delivered that day, he must say, that a speech of greater discomfort, and of a more chilling nature, had never fallen from any Ministers than the one made on the present occasion, which would be conveyed by the next post to the people of Ireland. It announced to the country that outrage and disorder had been repressed in Ireland, as far as might be, by military and police. Now, what would have been the right way to repress outrage and disorder in Ireland during all the time that had elapsed? Why, by pouring in food. The Chancellor of the Exchequer shook his head; but let him remember that on the 26th of August, in his place in Parliament, he had promised meal to the people of Ireland at 14*d.* a stone; Indian meal was to come in at that price; whereas now, in the district where he lived, near the town, it was 2*s.* 6*d.* a stone, and in the mountain districts it was 2*s.* 10*d.* Ireland was now in the condition of a city besieged by the direst of all foes—by famine; and it was impossible that private charity could answer all the calls that were being made upon it. The Speech recommended Parliament to take into their serious consideration the policy of opening the ports and suspending the navigation laws. He wanted to know why the noble Lord, who, if he was famous for anything, was famous for what the hon. Member for Bath called civil valour, did not, four months ago, by an Order of Council, open the ports and suspend those laws. He feared not to say, that Government had been guilty of gross misapprehension — that was the mildest term — in coming down on the 19th of January, when the people were dying of famine, with a recommendation to open the ports. What relief would that afford to the people of Skibbereen; or to those who were dying universally throughout Ireland? He told them most solemnly, it was his firm impression, that, until they took some steps for throwing food into Ireland, all the schemes they might form for the future — emigration, or plans to put the people on the same footing—would be of no avail, for Ireland would be one vast charnel house. He had observed a very general disposition in some quarters to treat the subject of Ireland with a sort of sneer, which did not befit the occasion. Yes, he had seen that spirit exhibited in a most misplaced manner. The noble Lord who spoke from the bench below him (Lord G. Bentinck) had told them that 10,000 people had already died in Ireland. He did not know what data the noble Lord had for the statement; but he believed it to be under the mark. It had also been stated, on the authority of the Dean of Cloyne, that in the county of Cork 5,000 people had died of absolute starvation. In short, the people were dying right and left; but he would frankly tell the House and the Government, that there were people in his neighbourhood who said that they would not lie down and die: he supposed the allusion to military and police pointed to that portion of Tipperary in which the inhabitants made these avowals. He wished to ask the Government if, having delayed for four months to introduce food into Ireland, this was the only point that was to go forth? he wished to know distinctly from the Government what other measures they meant to bring forward for Ireland. Was the opening of the ports or the suspension of the navigation laws all? Had they any hope of getting provisions in that way? Every man must know there was none. He did say, that, unless Government were prepared to do something further—unless they would say something more explicit as to their intentions, he thought that some man of greater weight than himself ought to move an Amendment to the Address, stating that the House had no confidence in Her Majesty's Government. They might have confidence in individual Members of that Government; but he believed that Government were not now acting for themselves. He believed that the strings were pulled by some persons in the Treasury — that Ministers were acting on the politics — economical theories — of others, and not exerting their own minds on this subject. He had reason, indeed, to believe, that they were acting on the theories of Mr. Trevelyan, which were inimical to Irish interests. At all events, they had committed the grossest blunders on the very first principles of political economy. He should resume his seat, feeling perfectly confident, that unless Government should have measures in store which would offer more certain resources to the people of Ireland, that people would be little inclined to lie down and die in silence.

SIR R. H. INGLIS said, that, much as he had previously wished to catch the Speaker's eye, he doubly wished it after the closing sentences of the speech which the House had just heard, because those sentences referred by name to one whom he felt it an honour to call his friend—he meant Mr. Trevelyan — and referred to him by a description which he solemnly believed was as utterly inapplicable to him as it could be to any individual whatever. The hon. Member, in total ignorance, he was sure, of the real character of Mr. Trevelyan, had described him as "inimical to Ireland." Independently of the highest intellectual qualities, and (what was far more important) the highest moral principles, which in themselves would be a guarantee against his being inimical to any of his fellow-beings, Mr. Trevelyan was (to his, Sir R. H. Inglis's, knowledge) chargeable with the fault, if it were one, of being only too partial to Ireland. He spoke in the presence of those who must necessarily know far better than himself, and to them he appealed to bear him out when he said that Mr. Trevelyan had in the course of the last six months not merely discharged with zeal his most laborious official duties with respect to Ireland, but that he had in addition taken the most active part in promoting measures of individual exertion to relieve the distress. As a private friend, he felt it his duty, in justice to Mr. Trevelyan, to take the earliest opportunity of vindicating him, in the presence of that House, from a charge at variance with facts, and which should not have been made at all against any individual in his position by name. He now turned to the hon. Member for Mayo. That hon. Member had begun his speech by giving utterance to his apprehension of the effect likely to be produced in Ireland by a certain expression as to that country being "a curse to England," which, he said, had been used by the hon. and learned Member for Bath. Now his own mind and memory did not supply any such words so used by the hon. and learned Member; and having consulted three or four others, who were equally unconscious of having heard the words, he could not but believe that the hon. Member for Mayo had mistaken them, and that it was, therefore, altogether unnecessary to have appealed, as he had done in succession, to the noble Lord at the head of the Treasury, to the right hon. Baronet who lately filled that office, and to the noble Lord the Member for Lynn, imploring each not to sanction any such description of Ireland. The hon. Member for Meath declared that Ireland demanded relief as a claim of right, as the discharge of a debt, and not by way of appeal to the better and kindlier feelings of Englishmen. The hon. Member said that all our public buildings had been raised by the Irish people. In one sense they were. Every one who had read the *Rejected Addresses* knew in what sense Drury-lane Theatre was built by men of that nation, designated by an epithet which he (Sir R. H. Inglis) would not then repeat. The hon. Member specified among these fabrics Lansdowne House, and what he called Devonshire Palace. Perhaps the amount expended in Ireland from English money on such works, or at least expended in the construction of public works in Ireland, was at least equal to the amount extracted from Ireland and so laid out in England. At all events, these were not matters of debtor and creditor account, upon which the House was called to legislate. The people of Ireland were to be relieved freely and nobly by the people of England; but it was not to be claimed as of right. And here he could not help adverting to the speech of the hon. and learned Member for Bath. Whenever he rose, the House expected the bitterest sarcasm and the most acute reasoning, though, as it was not always founded on the soundest premises or on the justest principles, as he (Sir R. Inglis) might think, it was not always very conclusive in effect. Never had he less disappointed the House than on that night. His speech was divided into two parts, that which related to the foreign relations of the country, and that which related to Ireland. The first part, which related to Ireland alone, proceeded altogether upon a misapprehension of what was desired by hon. Members, except the few who might represent in the House the "United Irishmen of 1847;" because he himself had said, that, if this were a demand for the present year only, he would cheerfully meet it at any personal sacrifice; but that it was because he regarded it as a systematic attempt to impose upon the people of Great Britain the exclusive burden of maintaining the people of Ireland for ever, that he rose in his place and repudiated such a claim as a right. Now, though such a claim might be directly urged by some, and be the legitimate inference of certain orations and resolutions elsewhere, it had not been put forth by any one as yet in this House. For his own part, while he did not deny the paramount claim of Ireland to the attention of the House, (and it had almost wholly, with two or three slight exceptions, occupied the first seven speeches of the night,) he did deny its exclusive claim; and he felt, that those who had listened to them all might almost have fancied that they were on College Green, and that Ireland had as great a share of the time of that House as if they were now sitting in Dublin. He regretted that not one word should hitherto have been uttered with the slightest reference to the inhabitants of another part of the empire, who were now enduring the calamity by which they had been visited with a Christian patience not unworthy their profession of religion. [*Cheers.*] He thanked hon. Members on both sides for that generous cheer, which acknowledged that he was not describing too strongly the sufferings and patience of their countrymen, the people of Scotland. It was true that the people of Scotland had not banded themselves in, or enjoyed the advantage of, "United Scotchmen" meetings, or of being represented by such deputations as had come from Ireland; for they had been patient under their misery in their own country, and not clamorous out of it. He could appeal to the representatives of Scotland for the truth of the fact which he asserted, that the inhabitants of the West Highlands and Islands had suffered almost as much as those of Ireland, and had borne it with a Christian patience which did honour to their profession of religion. He would now advert to the second part of the hon. Member for Bath's speech, which had certainly relieved the debate from the almost uniformity of its character in reference to Irish affairs. His noble Friend the Member for Lynn had, indeed, touched upon two points of foreign policy to which attention had recently been directed. But before he pursued this subject, and quitted that of Irish distress, he must not omit to notice that the hon. and learned Member for Bath had specially referred to another part of his (Sir R. Inglis's) noble Friend's speech; namely, that, if the measures to be proposed in respect to Ireland next Monday by the Government should not be satisfactory, he (Lord G. Bentinck) would then be prepared to produce a comprehensive plan for the settlement of that question. "Where is your plan," said the hon. and learned Member, "where is your comprehensive plan?" Why, by the very terms in which it was mentioned by the noble Lord, it was not a plan which was absolutely and necessarily ever to come before the House; and the hon. and learned Member could not fairly call upon his noble Friend to produce that or any other plan, or blame him for not stating that, which at the beginning he had declared to be contingent upon the failure of the Government plan. He would now advert to the foreign questions, on which his noble Friend, as well as the hon. and learned Memder for Bath, had touched. He (Sir R. Inglis) agreed with the noble Lord that the question of the Spanish marriages was not one on which the noble Lord the Secretary for Foreign Affairs would carry the people of England with him, if he made the infraction of the Treaty of Utrecht the ground of a war. Not that the hon. and learned Member for Bath appeared to him to be correct in deprecating any reference to the Treaty of Utrecht, as if it were a dead letter; on the contrary, it was not only not a dead letter, but had been referred to in diplomatic intercourse between England and Spain within the last two years, as a sufficient ground of international appeal: it was, in fact, at this moment, as adequate a ground of appeal as in the year after it was signed. He admitted, then, that the Government had a fair right to refer to the Treaty of Utrecht, as still binding upon all the parties; and he admitted further, that the actual reference was justified by the facts of the case. It was not the intention of the contracting parties to that treaty, that, at any period whatever, so far as human beings could foresee or bind future events, any descendant of Philip V. should have the power of sitting upon the two thrones of France and Spain: and there was the remarkable expression used by Philip V. on his renunciation, which was included in that treaty, that the exclusion of the lines of Orleans and Berry, and the preference given even to the house of Carignan, was not to be a mutable arrangement, but was, like the needle of the compass, to remain invariable in one direction. So far as the good faith of treaties was concerned, the Treaty of Utrecht had been violated; inasmuch as one of the cases contemplated by that treaty had occurred; and had, therefore, legally justified the remonstrances of the English Government. But though the Government were thus justified, he (Sir R. Inglis) did not think it expedient that the peace of Europe should have been risked, and that cordial good understanding with our neighbours, expressed in two words by them, should be, perhaps, for ever lost, by any remonstrance, however just, by any reference, however clear, to the Treaty of Utrecht, when the event practically contemplated by that treaty as the great evil to be avoided, namely, the union of the two crowns on one head, was so remote a contingency; as every calculator must admit on the principles of his own science. We might, therefore, be perfectly justified by all the usages of diplomacy in referring to the Treaty of Utrecht; but the object was not to be put in competition with the maintenance of the peace of Europe, which we had risked by laying such stress upon that treaty. The object, however just, was not to be put in comparison with the maintenance of the peace of Europe. With regard to Cracow, he saw with great regret the measures which had been adopted towards that unfortunate State. He could not think, because certain illuminations had taken place at Cracow, at a time that it was in military possession of the troops of the Emperor of Austria, with the certainty that the two nearest Powers were ready to throw their armies in to repress any manifestations of public feeling—he could not think that an illumination of the city, even assuming it to have been far more general than it was, could have been interpreted as a proof of the acquiescence of the people of Cracow themselves in the sacrifice of their independence. They might or might not have been so degraded as to acquiesce in the sacrifice of their independence; but it was for that House, and for Englishmen in general, to say whether they would rest satisfied with the violation of the treaty, and whether those who had violated the Treaty of Vienna in this particular instance, might not only themselves proceed to violate it in others suitable to their own convenience, but whether they had not given a direct sanction and encouragement to France to violate that treaty on its own part whenever it might be convenient. No individual Member on either side had attempted to raise any objection to the unanimity with which he trusted the Address would be voted; and with respect to any disputed point of policy, he would at present abstain from saying anything, as other opportunities would present themselves. But he could not conclude without expressing his hope that a Session, which had certainly opened with less prospect of comfort than almost any Session of late years, might yet be so guided, that by the providence and grace of God the evils which now appeared to us inevitable, might by His mercy be averted. He was sure that no one could look at affairs, either at home or abroad, without feeling how completely all the prospects of happiness and security in which they had indulged a few short years ago appeared to have been cut off. He would not say that the day, though dark and cloudy, was yet without a sun behind the cloud; but he trusted that all present would, in their individual characters, whether in or out of the House, feel more strongly the necessity of maintaining those principles by which alone they could hope for the permanent honour and well-being of their common country.

LORD J. MANNERS thought he should best discharge his duty by saying as little as possible on the various points proposed to their consideration in the Speech that day delivered. He yielded to no one in the sincere desire he felt to benefit those portions of our fellow-countrymen who were now suffering so severely. Ministers, with the view of meeting that melancholy state of things, proposed to the House to suspend for the present the small duty now levied on imported corn, and the operation of the navigation laws. They had heard from several Gentlemen whose opinions were entitled to great weight, that those measures would not produce much practical good to the Irish people. He was afraid this opinion was likely to be verified by events; and if the measures he himself proposed should be subjected justly to the same criticism, he should feel at least satisfied with having discharged his duty. It was well known to the Members of that House that during both last year and the present, many European States had been suffering from a similar want of provisions, and had thought it right and wise to prohibit, as far as they might, the exportation of corn from their respective countries. He was informed, on the highest authority, that within the last ten days there had been lying in the Seine no less than twenty-seven English vessels, freighted with English corn, whilst the population of a great part of the British empire were suffering from all the evils now known to the whole world. It did appear to him that such a state of things ought not to be permitted; and that while suspending the navigation laws and duties on importation, we should follow the example which had been set by other nations, and prevent the exportation of corn. With respect to the Spanish marriages, he should not say a word on that topic now, did he not think it incumbent on him not to allow one day to pass without directing the attention of the House to one passage in a despatch which had been published, casting, he must think, a most unwarranted imputation on an illustrious Personage now resident in this country. He wished to draw the attention of the House to the following despatch, written by M. Guizot, dated February 27, 1846—a despatch, in which he stated, that the candidates for the hand of the Queen of Spain were limited, and reduced in such a manner as might not inappropriately be called Hobson's choice:—

> "The sons of the Infante Don Francisco de Paula are also exceedingly compromised—first, by their false proceedings; secondly, by their intimacy with the Radical party, and their antipathy of the Moderado party; thirdly, by the ill-feeling of the Queen Mother and of the Queen herself. The sons of Don Carlos are as far as the present goes at least impossible; first, by the opposition loudly proclaimed by all parties; secondly, by the exclusion formally pronounced in the constitution; thirdly, by their own dispositions, constantly far removed from the conduct which could

alone give them chances of success. The present situation of the descendants of Philip V. in the question of the marriage of the Queen of Spain is therefore become a bad one."

"The French Government," M. Guizot said, a few lines lower down in the same despatch, "had done all in their power to render the sons of Don Carlos possible;" he begged the House to bear in mind that the date of this was the 27th of February, 1846. Would they believe that until June, 1846, the French Government, so far from taking any steps to render the sons of Don Carlos possible, had taken no steps whatever even to ascertain the dispositions and principles which guided the conduct of that Prince, whom M. Guizot thought fit thus to mention. In June, 1846, M. Guizot, sending for the first time to the Marquess of Villafranca, submitted to him a paper containing six propositions, saying that if the Count de Montemolin would sign that paper, the influence of the King of the French would be used to procure the hand of the Queen of Spain for the Count. To that paper the Count refused to attach his signature. He would not now detail to the House what those six propositions were. He would content himself with saying, that the first of them was of such a character, that, consistently with his own integrity and honour, the Count de Montemolin could not sign the paper. So far, however, from expressing any opinions which could warrant M. Guizot in thus characterizing unfavourably his conduct and disposition, the Count de Montemolin, in refusing his signature, stated his earnest wish to enter into such arrangements as might be consistent with the honour and dignity of both the great parties of Spain, for the purpose of terminating the struggles of their unhappy country. That was the only point he thought it right thus early to bring under the attention of the House; and he did so mainly for the purpose of inducing the French Government, if possible, to lay before the French Chambers the answer submitted to them, he believed on the 28th of June, by the Count de Montemolin, in order that the world at large might know that if civil war breaks out again in Spain, to the further injury of that unhappy country, and to the disturbance of Europe, the blame must rest, not with that injured Prince, who suffered so long an unjust captivity at Bourges, but must be laid to the charge of those Ministers who did not hesitate thus unfairly to characterize the conduct of one whom they had deeply injured, in order to gratify what he was afraid must be termed the fatal ambition of the Napoleon of peace.

Lord JOHN RUSSELL: In rising, Sir, to address the House at a period when a great calamity afflicts part of the United Kingdom, I must thank the House for the disposition it has shown to-night, not only to agree with unanimity to the Address which has been proposed, but to consider both the extent of that calamity and the measures that it may be thought proper to introduce for its remedy, in a fair spirit, without any mixture of party bias; without any disposition, I may say, to blame the Government more than a difference of opinion may justly lead men to blame them, and thus to render that which is a task exceedingly difficult under any circumstances, somewhat less difficult than it would be if the course which I have described had not been pursued. I cannot wonder that the hon. Gentleman the Member for Limerick should severely take to task the conduct of Her Majesty's Government, because his opinion is so diametrically opposite to theirs, that if his views are well founded, no doubt they have been guilty of a great neglect of duty. But what I have to maintain is, that the policy of the hon. Member for Limerick, which I think was supported in a similar spirit by my noble Friend the Member for Lynn, is a policy which no Government ought to undertake—which, if undertaken, would lead only to failure. To try it by the most severe test, and at the same time the fairest which can be applied, I think it would lead to a greater number of deaths from famine than the course we thought it our duty to pursue. Sir, the opinion of that hon. Gentleman was, that the Government ought to have ransacked the world for food; that they should have appeared as buyers in every market of Europe and America, and should have attempted to feed the people of Ireland with the produce they procured. Now, I think in the first place, it is evident that no sooner had that intention been declared—as declared it must have been, because every person disposed to enter into those concerns asked of Government before the conclusion of last Session what should be their policy—I say, if such had been declared, there would have been an end at once of all private enterprise—an end at once of all application of the capital of this great country—of the means and of the skill which our merchants are so well known to possess—and that everything would have been abandoned to the care of the Government which had been so presumptuous as to undertake such a task. With a limited supply in each of those markets—and I regret to say that it was a limited supply—what would have been the aspect of affairs when the English Government appeared as the purchasers—as the bidders for the whole of the grain in those markets? The noble Lord talks of a rise from 3*s*. to 9*s*. for the bushel of wheat; but what would have been the rise had the English Government declared that it was prepared to feed the people of Ireland—that it was responsible for that duty? I think that that would have limited and impeded the operation of the Government? But suppose that by means of our vessels a supply had been brought into Ireland, then the next thing to have been undertaken would have been what would, in fact, have amounted to the whole retail trade of that country—to have supplied every person who was unable to procure food from his ordinary resources. We have heard enough of the enormous staff which was required for the public works; but what a staff would be required to distribute that food throughout the whole of Ireland! It would then have been demanded, and naturally demanded, as, indeed, it has been, that the price of the grain should have been somewhat under the cost price, so as to enable the very poorest to obtain food. But what, I ask, would in that case have been the consequence to the rest of the population of the United Kingdom? In proportion as we had been robbing other parts of the kingdom of the supplies of corn, which would otherwise have naturally gone to them, we should have been increasing the price to our own consumers in England and Scotland. And how could we justify the act that we were affording food to Ireland at a certain low price, while the labouring people in our country were paying an enormous price for food, in consequence of the enhancement occasioned by the act of the Government? Would not they have turned round justly, and have said, "Do not do this by half measures; if you, the Government, undertake to feed the people—if you fly in the face of all that has been recommended by such men as Pitt and Ricardo—if you persist in your determination, let all the labouring classes of the three kingdoms procure food at the same low prices, and do you make yourselves responsible for the whole." Sir, I say that the mere narrative of what the Government would have had to do, shows how unwise and impracticable it would have been for the Government to have undertaken any such responsibility. Gentlemen have said, however, that in some parts of Ireland this system has been carried out. It is true, that in a few places where there has been no trade in provisions, where the roads have been unfrequented, and where there has been a general difficulty in obtaining food—in such cases, I say, the Government has thought it right to make exceptions; and in twenty-one or twenty-two places west of the Shannon we have established depôts where corn might be supplied by means of Government steamers, and retailed. You may say that there should have been more than twenty-two such depôts; others may think that there should not have been so many. That is a question only of discretion and degree. What we endeavoured was, to supply those places where it was most unlikely food would otherwise be sent, and to interfere as little as possible with private trade. And I will not say that even the interference we have occasioned has been without its evils; for we have seen that, with regard to one of those places at least, immediately the Government depôt was established, persons who were about to set up shops for the sale of meal and flour at once relinquished their intentions of doing so. But we did take means to supply those depôts, and for that purpose 200,000 quarters of corn have been purchased from time to time without disturbing the markets, and without taking upon ourselves the task of feeding the whole people of Ireland. But then there are many complaints made of the measure which we did attempt to guide in pursuance of an Act passed last Session, by which the poor were to be employed under the Board of Works, and upon public works of one kind or another. Now no man can be more sensible than I am of the very great imperfections of that scheme applied to so great an extent as it has been. Nobody can be more aware than I am—because I have had to watch it from day to day—of the abuses that crept in, and of the imperfections that prevailed, or of the difficulty of remedying those imperfections, and removing those abuses. But, at the same time, I must say that in principle—were not the calamity so extensive—were it not that such vast numbers of persons had been obliged to have recourse to that mode of relief—the measure is a sound and a just one. For it must be remembered that the question is not, as many gentlemen in Ireland seem to have supposed, and as some here have repeated, whether or not the works on which the men were employed were useful or useless. The question is, whether it were not the best mode of ascertaining who were destitute, and of furnishing those persons with the means of procuring food without destroying their industry. Now see how the system works in England. It has been frequently found to be the best, almost the only way of meeting cases of great distress when the workhouses have been full, and there has been no suitable employment for persons in their usual occupations. In such cases in this nation, which is by no means an extravagant nation with regard to industry, which generally calculates pretty well what would be the profits to be derived from the employment of industry, it has been quite common, in Nottinghamshire, for example, and elsewhere, to set men to break stones in considerable numbers and for a long period of time—not that broken stones at such periods are particularly required, but because it is thought desirable, whilst you feed the people, not to interfere with the ordinary trade and labour of the country. But we have found in England whenever this system has been introduced, that there has been a disposition on the part of those employed, immediately a demand for labour has sprung up, to leave those employments which were about the hardest in labour and the worst rewarded, to obtain private employment. Thus when trade revived, the demand on the poor rate ceased, and men returned to their original occupations. In Ireland, I am obliged to say, we have had to contend with two difficulties. One was, that, at the commencement of our operations, a great proportion of the persons employed did not really attempt any effective labour—their labour was hardly real—they were, in fact, idle and loitering on the road. Then, to remedy that abuse, task-work was introduced. That was a remedy for the immediate evil; but then, by task-work, and weekly wages, the greater portion of the men earned more than they could obtain from their ordinary occupations. Thus, instead of being the very worst market to which they could bring their labour, it has proved in many cases the best, and men have preferred that labour on the public works to any they could obtain from their landlords. I have mentioned these as some of the evils. There are many others, which the House will see have sprung up from time to time. For example, when we had to employ some 300,000 or 400,000 men, it was necessary to supply a vast number of persons to superintend them; and it was impossible to do that without admitting some who were either not worthy of trust, or who were not otherwise fitted for the employment. But, as I have stated, the real object is not so much to procure useful work as to enable persons to earn sufficient food, to preserve them in habits of industry, and yet not to make the employment preferable to such as is offered by private individuals. But when we reflect upon the employment of 470,000 persons, representing with their families, I should think, a population of not less than 2,000,000, with a payment of 158,000*l.* in one week, I cannot regard that as an indifferent circumstance; and I cannot but think it shows that the Government of this country have been anxious—whether they have been in error or not remains to be seen—but have been anxious, by means of the resources of the empire, to keep the destitute of Ireland from the sad fate which impended, and which would have fallen on them had not measures been adopted to meet the sad calamity. Let us, if we can, adopt better measures—let us most anxiously consider these matters. I am quite willing to say with my right hon. Friend near me, that I consider what has occurred in Ireland as a "national calamity"—and I think that the national resources are fitly employed in endeavouring to meet it. I must admit, at the same time, that I do not think, considering the state in which the people of Ireland have been found by this calamity—considering that numbers, as have been stated by my right hon. Friend, in that country, are ordinarily for thirty weeks in the year without wages—considering that many of these persons frequently live, in ordinary years, upon one meal of potatoes a day—considering that this was their state in ordinary years, I cannot think that any measure which the Government can advise, or the Legislature can adopt, will prevent very severe suffering, and in many cases even mortality. I must confess, seeing that the people of Ireland have not the ordinary resources which the people of this country possess—that they have neither comforts to deny themselves, nor food of which they can partake less sparingly, but that their food has never been more than sufficient—I fear that no measure will completely reach the pressing nature of the present calamity. I should say, at this time, that with regard to all we have done, we must consider ourselves, especially those who are more nearly connected with those departments, entirely responsible for the measures we have undertaken; that we do not consent that any subordinate officer should bear any part of our responsibility. But I must say, that whilst Mr. Trevelyan has acted with intelligence, with judgment, and I am sure with indefatigable and most untiring zeal, yet, with regard to the orders he has received, if any blame is to be laid—if any censure is to be cast, let that blame and that censure fall upon us, and not upon our subordinate officer. With regard to part of the measures proposed, it has been said that though the admission of foreign corn without the payment of duty, and the suspension of the navigation laws, might now be of some advantage, yet that those steps should have been taken in the month of November last. Why, Sir, this matter was very seriously considered at that time, and with regard to one part of the question, viz., the meeting of Parliament, we had to consider that if we did meet the Parliament, we should be acting against the opinion of the Irish Government, and against the opinion of almost every one I saw connected with Ireland, who thought that to take away at that time—at the commencement of the severe pressure—every person connected by property with Ireland, would inflict a very great injury upon that country; and that, consequently, Parliament should not be called together at that time. Then, Sir, I had to consider whether the evil were really so great as to make it necessary that Parliament should be called together in order to suspend these laws. In the first instance, with regard to the Corn Law, it was no longer a duty of 14*s*. or 12*s*. a quarter that we had to contend with, as was the case the year before; for by an Act passed last Session, that duty had been reduced to 4*s*. a quarter. And I am of opinion with those who have already spoken upon this view of the subject, though I think it right to recommend it, though I shall earnestly recommend it to the adoption of this House, that the practical effect consequent upon opening the ports will be nothing very considerable. But, in the next place, there was at that time, according to all the opinions I could collect both from America and elsewhere, an impression that the price of wheat was not going to be very high; and in support of this impression we found that for two or three weeks it fell, having risen to 62*s*., to 58*s*., and there did not appear to be any prospect of a rise. With these reasons, seeing that the benefit to be derived was not so very considerable, that the pressure was not so very great, and that there was a general impression that an injury would be done to Ireland by calling Parliament together at that time, we certainly did think proper to advise Her Majesty further to prorogue Parliament until the month of January. I do not think if we had adopted these measures in November that they would have had an effect sufficient to have induced us to have assembled Parliament at that time, still less do I think it would have been justifiable after a deviation from the Act of Parliament, which the Lord Lieutenant had sanctioned, to have interfered by an Order in Council to set aside our laws without the sanction of Parliament. There are only two or three points in connexion with the Royal Speech on which I think it necessary to address any remarks to the House. The hon. and learned Member for Bath has entered rather fully into the subject of the Montpensier marriage, and he has read some translations, I presume, of articles in French papers, which I think give a very incomplete and imperfect view of the case. He has given at once credence to these papers, and he conceives that any succession of the children of the Infanta is not contrary to the Treaty of Utrecht—that it is of the utmost importance to maintain our friendly alliance with France—and that we should not express any opinion on the subject. Now, I do not wish to enter much into this discussion until the papers are produced. I shall be quite willing to leave the defence of any conduct I may have pursued on this subject, for which I shall be responsible as a Member of the Government, to the despatches of my noble Friend, which will be laid before the House. But I cannot quite accede to those doctrines which seem to imply that no matter of this kind is worthy the attention of the British Government; and I own I am the more inclined to differ from that opinion, because I think that there is generally an indifference in the people of this country to foreign politics, and that public opinion does not act with that degree of warmth and energy which characterizes it in matters of domestic policy. This I know, however, that if the Government were to exhibit a similar apathy, and if some years afterwards it should be discovered that serious injury had been done to the power and station of this country, public opinion would blame, and I think would very justly blame, the Ministers of the Crown for their apathy. The people of this country would say, " We reposed in indifference, and did not show any great interest in these matters, trusting that our Government, which was charged with our foreign relations, would take care that no essential injury was done." Now, Sir, I cannot but regard this matter as one of very serious importance. I think that any expectations which may be formed by the French Government, will very probably be disappointed ; but I cannot but think that such an attempt as was made by Louis XIV., and again by Napoleon, to govern the destinies of Spain, might be repeated, and that the union of France and Spain in one system of foreign policy would be more likely to lead to hostilities in Europe, than if those two countries continued separate and independent, each having regard only to its own interests. I am stating what appears to me to be a general and, at the same time, an important fact. It has always been our object to prevent such a preponderance of authority in Europe as might tend to the destruction of the balance of power. We have always considered it our duty to endeavour to prevent any mischiefs which we could foresee, and prevent dangers from arising which might happen in a few years; and I cannot but think that such a course is a wise one, and that it would not become any Government to neglect it. But, let it be recollected, that the Government which preceded us took also an interest in the question ; which was not a question, as the hon. Member for Bath says, merely between sovereigns. It was Lord Aberdeen, when at the head of Foreign Affairs in this country, who commenced the correspondence with M. Guizot on the subject; for Lord Aberdeen thought, and thought rightly, that it was a matter in which England had an interest. He received, during that correspondence, assurances which led him to think that it would not be necessary to take any urgent step with respect to the subject of communication. The ground which he then took was, that if the Queen of Spain preferred a descendant of Philip V., and that the people of Spain affirmed that choice, England would have no objection to it, but that England could not propose a candidate who should be disagreeable to the Spanish people, nor could she agree that a marriage should take place between the Queen of Spain and an immediate member of the royal family of France, or between the immediate members of the royal families of France and Spain. I believe that language was perfectly correct, and, therefore, when we came into office, and the foreign policy of the country came under our consideration, we felt it right to follow the course which had been laid down on the part of this country on that occasion. I do not mean to say that with respect to all the particulars of this correspondence I was thoroughly informed, for during the communications which had taken place with Lord Aberdeen, the French Government had done much by letters and conversations, of which no trace was anywhere to be found. This I was fully determined on, that, agreeing to the line laid down by the former Government, the present Government should state that it had no wish to propose an English candidate ; and with respect to one prince in particular, namely, Prince Leopold of Saxe Coburg, the Government of this country never entertained for a moment a wish to put him forward, or support any pretensions he might entertain with respect to the throne of Spain ; and I must say, that in any advice which I felt it my duty to offer to the Sovereign upon this subject, I found the greatest readiness and willingness to sanction this view, for Her Majesty never wished that Prince Leopold of Saxe Coburg should become a candidate for the hand of the Queen of Spain, supported by England. I state this, because I know it has been industriously set about that this is in reality a dispute between the royal families of France and of this country, in consequence of the course taken by the royal family of France with respect to the throne of Madrid, and of a counter attempt of ours to place one of its members on that throne. As far as we have been concerned, and so far as I know with regard to the late Government, there was no foundation whatsoever for such a statement. I do not know what Prince Leopold of Saxe Coburg would have said if a proposition on the subject had been made to him by the Government of Spain ; but I have been told that he would not have been likely to entertain it. We made up our minds not to recommend to Spain a candidate of our own, or to make ourselves in any way concerned with the internal government of that country. When, however, engagements which had been voluntarily entered into were departed from, and it appeared to us that there was danger of an alliance being formed which might at a future period be prejudicial to the balance of power in Europe, we had no hesitation in stating what our opinions upon the subject were. The hon. Member for the University of Oxford seems to say, that although we were right in our arguments, and correct in our opinions, it would have been better to have allowed the alliance to proceed without any observation on our part either to France or Spain, but quietly to acquiesce in the course that was taken. Now, I hold it to be more frank and becoming the character of this nation to state openly the view which we entertained, that we, as a Government, could not consent to a course which might lead to future evils. What we said in substance and spirit was, that we saw danger that hereafter disputes with respect to the succession might arise from this marriage, and we could not consent to it. Such wasour opinion; and when that arises, England will take the course most consistent with her honour, with her station amongst the Powers of Europe, and most conformable to the will of the people of Spain. I perfectly agree in thinking that if the choice of the Spanish princess was one to which we could not object on the clear grounds of treaty, that the wishes of Spain should be considered paramount. At the same time every one will see, that with regard to such a principle there must be limitation. Even those who most dispute our interpretation of the Treaty of Utrecht, admit that one and the same prince ought not by that treaty to reign in France and Spain. That is a case, however, which you must leave to time. For my part, I will say, that it is with the most sincere regret that I find myself opposed in opinion to what has been done by the Government of France. I feel how desirable it is that this country and France should be on the closest terms of friendship. We have never done anything which, I think, was calculated to disturb that friendship. I sincerely lament, if, as I think, by the fault of others, there has been that separation between us with regard to the Spanish marriages. With regard to the other subject of foreign affairs, the extinction of the free State of Cracow, I think there is so little difference of opinion in this House, or anywhere else, upon the nature of that act, that I really feel it unnecessary to say more, than that it seems as if the taint which originally attached to the first partition of Poland —that unholy act, which is perhaps the most to be condemned of any act amongst nations in the history of modern Europe; that that taint seems to have attached itself to this, the last remains of a Polish State, and to have induced the Powers who were parties to the incorporation of the free State of Cracow with the dominions of the Emperor of Austria, to forget all their obligation, and to have most precipitately, and, as far as appears to me, without any justifiable ground, abused their power, without considering the relations of justice which they were bound to observe. I know not that I need address the House further, with respect to any other parts of Her Majesty's Speech. I shall have an opportunity very shortly of bringing forward the separate points therein adverted to. On Monday next, I propose to give the House an outline of the various measures which we have in contemplation with regard to Ireland. These measures will afterwards form the subject of separate Bills, and be placed fully under the consideration of this House. If my noble Friend the Member for Lynn (Lord G. Bentinck) has any better plan to propose, let him state it to the House, and let us all endeavour to find those measures which may be most calculated to raise Ireland, to unite her more closely with this country by sympathy and affection, giving to her not only all that bare justice would require, but also that help in her necessity which I think any part of the United Kingdom is entitled to demand. I believe that much injury has been done—that I must say—much injury has been done with regard to the feelings of the people of this country, by the language that has been used in Ireland, with respect to the conduct of England in past years. I believe that that language has indisposed many from making such exertions as they would otherwise be disposed to make in behalf of Ireland at this moment; but still I believe that the general wish of the nation is to do everything that is possible, and that may be useful to Ireland. I believe that it is the wish and the desire of this House also. I lament that there has not been in Ireland at the present moment so much of general combination of exertion as has taken place in Scotland, in those parts of that country which are suffering from a similar calamity. But I rejoice to see, independently of the spirit of the resolutions proposed, and the various plans propounded, that at a meeting lately held in Dublin, men of all parties united—men of all religions were combined, endeavouring to concur in plans which they thought would be useful to their country. I thought it was a good sign for the future fate of that country. Irishmen will allow me to say, that what they have often reason to complain of is, not so much the hostility of England, as the hostility of some parties of Irishmen themselves. I believe likewise, that in that meeting there was, with scarce an exception, a total abstinence from any language of asperity, either towards the Government, or any others with whom they might differ, with respect to the remedy to be applied. I trust when we come to discuss this measure in this House, there will be a similar spirit; and that however great her present calamity may be—however appalling to the imagination—however horrible to the feelings, the details of her present suffering may be, I may be confirmed in the hope that there may be reserved to Ireland many future years of prosperity; and that in strict union with England she may present the spectacle of a country where freedom and civilization have made rapid progress.

Mr. DISRAELI said, the noble Lord had addressed the House in a tone which he (Mr. Disraeli) wished he could imitate, and which he would endeavour to follow. The noble Lord had stated, with reference to one subject in this House, there would be no difference of opinion upon it. For his part, he believed that debate had shown there was certainly one subject upon which there no longer existed a difference of opinion—he meant the desire of that House and all parties in it to assist in the settlement of Ireland in a manner which would conduce to the happiness of that country, in bringing, on this occasion, to the consideration of the measures of Her Majesty's Government, not only a temperate but an indulgent and sympathizing spirit. But unfortunately that was not the subject on which the noble Lord had anticipated there could be no difference of opinion. He had, indeed, imagined that it would not have been brought before their consideration that night, though the course the debate had taken had more than once threatened it. The noble Lord had laid down some principles of foreign policy with which he thought no person there could disagree. All that he said, for example, upon the importance that France should not exercise a predominant influence in Spain, was a series of propositions which everybody had long accepted, though few might express them in language so felicitous as that of the noble Lord. All the noble Lord said on this subject was perfectly true, but it was not perfectly apposite. For it did not follow that the recent Spanish marriages led to this predominance. They knew from sources of information which were not before the House, but which were sufficiently authentic not to admit of its being doubted, that there was an estrangement between the two countries of France and England. They were told by the Speech from the Throne, that the Infanta of Spain had been married to a French prince, and that in consequence some correspondence had taken place between the two countries. One would naturally suppose that the correspondence would be of a congratulatory nature. They were not, however, informed in that instance of what they knew to be authentic—viz., that the noble Lord the Secretary of State (Lord Palmerston) had protested, with respect to this marriage, against the infringement of a treaty by one of the greatest Powers of Western Europe; and they were informed in the paragraph immediately following, that he had protested against the violation of another treaty still more important, by the greatest Power of Northern Europe. Those were circumstances which, in his opinion, should scarcely be allowed to pass unnoticed when the House met after a long recess, and when the attention of other legislative assemblies in Europe was directed towards them. He was of opinion that there had been no violation of treaty in either case. He laid that down merely as a point of international law. He was not viewing the question of policy with respect to France or Poland. He spoke only of the law. It was possible that the destruction of the political independence of Cracow might be a great blunder, as the destruction of Poland might have been a great crime. It might be contrary to our interests and our policy that a French prince should marry a Spanish princess; but all he wished the House to concede was, that if it were politic to interfere by protest, we ought to have done so upon unequivocal grounds, and with correct views of our rights and the stipulations of treaties. With regard to the Treaty of Utrecht, he thought it right to state that, in his opinion, the view of the noble Lord opposite and of the French Government, were both erroneous—the view of the noble Lord (Lord Palmerston) was a misconception, and the view of the French Government was an exaggeration. He did not agree with the English view of the object of the treaty; namely, that it was intended to prevent the intermarriage of the two families: or with the French, that its object was to preserve the throne of Spain to the descendants of Philip V. The object of the treaty was to prevent the union of the two crowns on one head, and that object was positively declared in the 6th article of the treaty; but what were the real intentions of the persons who signed the treaty, how it was to be carried into effect, and whether the interpretation of the noble Lord was correct, it was in their power to decide. If they looked to the renunciation of the Duke of Orleans, they would find that the Duke of Orleans laid down a policy for the future regulation of Europe. It was the reaction of the policy of Louis XIV., but highly interesting as the expression of opinion of one who was subsequently placed in a position to carry it into effect. Subsequent events proved the sincerity of those opinions. The object of the policy of the Duke of Orleans was to maintain the cordial feeling between England and France, so often spoken of. What was the first act of the Duke of Orleans—this prince who proved that he sincerely wished to fulfil his engagements—after the Treaty of Utrecht? To marry his daughter to a Spanish prince: and so frequent were such alliances between the descendants of those who signed the renunciations and the Spanish royal family, that there was not a Spanish prince alive who was not disqualified to sit on the throne of Spain, according to the interpretation of the noble Lord. Suppose a Spanish princess resigned her rights to the throne of France—for in spite of the Salique law she would have claims on the part of her offspring—and then married a French prince, who resigned his right to the throne of France, then, according to the view of the noble Lord, their offspring would be deprived of their rights to either throne. The 6th article of the treaty expressed its purport; the conduct of the signatories of the renunciations in immediately intermarrying with the Spanish house—conduct that was not impugned at the time—proved the intention of all parties to the treaty as to the mode in which it was to be fulfilled. He now came to the Treaty of Vienna, and in doing so he would look only to the legal merits of the case. It was unnecessary for him to remind the House of the mode of transacting affairs at a congress, although it would be convenient if they were recollected. The result was not, as too often supposed, a single treaty. After a general war, the various Powers of Europe assembled and settled their different treaties as between themselves. For instance, at the Congress of Utrecht, as the noble Lord well knew, there were nine treaties, all of which were Treaties of Utrecht, although the one we quoted was only that between France and England. When the Treaty of Vienna—that great instrument which we called the Treaty of Vienna—was signed, there had been previously negotiated seventeen treaties of the highest class of diplomatic interest; and it was recited at the commencement of the Treaty of Vienna, as the noble Lord well knew, that the Powers at the Congress, anxious to conclude the general settlement of Europe, and also to enforce their various negotiations with reciprocal ratifications, had agreed to include them in a common instrument. The consequence was, that in the Treaty of Vienna there were many sections of an original character, and others merely copied or quoted from other treaties; and in order to prevent misconceptions, in the 118th article, as the noble Lord well knew, these seventeen treaties were declared to be portions of the final act of the Congress. The three Polish treaties were included in these seventeen, nor was there any stipulation in the final act other than contained in these treaties, or in sections which were verbatim copied from the original instrument. If they admitted any violation of any clause in the Polish treaties as a violation of the Treaty of Vienna, they must, upon the same principle, admit that the violation of any clause in any of the seventeen treaties so included, was equally a violation of the Treaty of Vienna with the affair of Cracow. Then, let the House see what a position we should be placed in. In the first place, the treaty which settled the domestic constitution of Germany, which originated the present diet, which secured certain tribunals which had never been established, guaranteed the provincial estates—any omission on any of these heads, upon the principle of the noble Lord, being a violation of one of the seventeen treaties, was equally a violation of the Treaty of Vienna. For instance, the instrument that regulated the navigation of the rivers of Germany, was one of the seventeen treaties referred to, which was in the same category as the Polish treaties. He might say their stipulations were almost parochial, for at this moment the German princes affected by them could not appoint an inspector or sub-inspector of rivers, except for his life; and if this officer was appointed *de bene merito*, and not for life, that was a violation of the treaty. Difficulty was experienced at the Congress of Vienna in arranging the order of precedence. That affair was settled by one of the seventeen documents; but if a Minister violated these rules, the Treaty of Vienna was violated. The King of Sardinia agreed, as one of the bases upon which he should receive Genoa, that he would observe certain regulations with regard to the privileges of the university of Genoa. Five years after the King of Sardinia had signed the Treaty of Vienna, the privileges of the university of Genoa were violated. The treaty by which the King holds Genoa, is one of the seventeen treaties? Is then the Treaty of Vienna violated? The only mode to guide ourselves amid these incoherent inconveniences, is to resort to the acknowledged principles of public law. It was an acknowledged principle of public law that a superior instrument could never merge in an inferior one. This was the principle, and he could refer to great and authentic precedents to substantiate it; but he would refer to one, and one only. He referred to the Peace of Westphalia, which was the foundation of the public law of Europe until the French Revolution, and had been only superseded by the Treaty of Vienna. This was an analogous instance—a case in point. The Powers of Europe were in the same situation then as they were placed now. The question was discussed by the greatest jurisconsults of that learned age. The House would recollect that the Peace of Westphalia was negotiated at a congress at Munster. Germany had been the battle-field of a great war which was then terminated. The cases were parallel. It was even a thirty years' war. When the great Powers met to apportion territory, and settle the great questions as regarded the balance of power, they found it totally out of their power to deal with the affairs of Germany. It was therefore, agreed that they should be arranged at a separate congress, to be simultaneously held at the city of Osnabruck, at which the Emperor and the German Princes should alone be present. There a treaty was signed by the Emperor of Germany, the Princes of Germany, and the King of Sweden, who had become a German prince; and this treaty was then carried over to the chief congress at Munster, and there included in the treaty in chief, as the Polish treaties are in the final act of Vienna. What happened under this treaty? The free and imperial cities of Germany were placed in the same situation as Cracow. Through the influence of the King of Sweden they had obtained political existence. Sweden obtained for them the right of voting in the diet as every other sovereign State. But the Emperor and Princes never allowed the right. The free cities alleged a violation of the Treaty of Munster, and called upon the great Powers who signed it to vindicate their rights; the claim was amply discussed, but it was held by all the authorities, that the guarantee of the Treaty of Osnabruck, though included verbatim in the chief Treaty of Munster, bound only the signatories of the collateral treaty. But take a modern instance. Look at the disruption of the kingdom of the Netherlands. The kingdom of the Netherlands was not created by the Treaty of Vienna, but only by one of the seventeen included treaties. When the King of the Netherlands was in distress, did we interfere on account of the violation of the Treaty of Vienna? Not in the least. We did not pretend that the Treaty of Vienna was violated. We called the great Powers together who had signed the treaty with the Prince of Orange making him King of the Netherlands, and by virtue of that treaty they formed themselves into a conference. True, France was subsequently invited to join, for her presence was indispensable, and as a signatory of the final act of Vienna she had a right to interfere. But not because the Treaty of Vienna had been violated. If that were the ground of her appearance, why were not the other great Powers who had signed that treaty also summoned? It might be fairly asked, then, what was the use of the great Powers signing the general treaty? What position did they stand in with regard to the seventeen included treaties to which they were not parties? The position was intelligible if they would follow the principles of international law. Any contracting party to those treaties might appeal to them as witnesses and arbitrators. But Cracow was not a party to any treaty. It might be said that this was special pleading, and that it was intended the existence of

Cracow should be guaranteed. But he would show the noble Lord the extreme danger of leaving the path of public law. The Treaty of Vienna included the treaty by which the present Government of Germany was established. Well, the mediatised princes were promised political rights under that treaty which had never been granted—was that also a violation of the Treaty of Vienna? But they were not parties to the German treaty, and Cracow was not a party to the Polish treaties. The noble Lord overlooked the distinction between original articles and those that were merely quotations. He confessed he was alarmed at the state of our foreign affairs, when he found the noble Lord was not aware that a complete guarantee of Saxony to Prussia was contained in the Treaty of Vienna. The subject was not very agreeable to pursue, but it was of the deepest importance, whatever might be our opinions about France or Russia, that we did not found the conduct we recommended or the sentiments we expressed upon perverted views of treaties. We should most distinctly comprehend what the engagements of the Powers of Europe were to us, and what our reciprocal engagements were to them. Nothing was more important to Europe and this country, than that the great settlement at Vienna should be respected; but on the principles laid down by the noble Lord, the Treaty of Vienna was not only worthless, but it had always been worthless. But if they took the sound principle that the superior instrument could not merge in the inferior—if they distinguished between the Treaty of Vienna and the included treaties, they would adopt a distinction recommended by law, by historic precedent, and recognised by modern practice, even by that of the noble Lord himself. On the other hand, the inconvenience in which they would involve themselves if they hastily adopted the noble Lord's version of the Treaty of Vienna would be such as was not within the power of language to describe, or modern statesmanship to extricate us from. He put before the House this sketch only of his argument; but he trusted they would reflect upon it, and especially the noble Lord, whose phrase, that this treaty had been "manifestly violated," clearly showed that he thought there might be considerable doubts upon the subject, for if a treaty has been violated it was sufficient so to state without having recourse to epithets and strained expressions. He should be glad, therefore, if they would rest upon that basis which had been relied on from the days of Richelieu to our own time, and was the only safe one—namely, acknowledged principles of public law, and the gravity of weighty precedents. It was of importance at this time to be on the best terms with our allies. He had not the common jealousy of the influence of France in Spain, and Russia in Germany. To suppose that great Powers like France and Russia would not have their own ambition to develop, as England had hers, was to expect the impossible. But what was the use of the power of England except to combat those influences, whether in Spain or elsewhere, if they found them aiming at an inconvenient preponderance? He often heard that peace could only be maintained by a cordial understanding between England and France, or a secret understanding between England and Russia; but peace could be maintained by England alone, if she understood her position, and did not underrate her power. The two systems that pervaded the Continent were rival systems, but they need not look on them in a litigious spirit. England held exactly the same position now as she did in the days of the rivalry between Frances I. and Charles V.; England held the balance, and if she was conscious of her position, and exercised her influence with firmness and discretion, she might obtain and enjoy the blessings of peace, and hand them down to posterity, better than with partial alliances with either of the rival Powers, by a good understanding and a generous friendship with both.

Colonel CONOLLY only rose to defend the Irish landlords from the bitter attack of the hon. and learned Member for Bath. In justice to the county he represented, he was bound to say that, considering the extreme sufferings of the people, a more ungenerous and insulting tone could not be adopted, and if anything would prevent them from enduring their sufferings longer, it would be the language of the hon. Member for Bath; who, at the same time, exhibited the grossest ignorance, ascribing to the landlords of Ireland, with great virulence, what arose from the dispensations of Providence. The people of Ireland were suffering from the non-interference of the Government. He had witnessed the effects of this non-interference with pain and regret. In his part of the country the Commissary General had written a letter, which was not meant to be offensive, but was ridiculous and absurd. When the people asked him for food, he told them to go to the mills, which did not exist. He exhorted the noble Lord not to adhere to theories when the subjects of the Crown were suffering for want of food. He did not want them to give it them for nothing; but to introduce it into the country, for wages could not be converted into food on the western coast of Ireland for want of mills. He should be sorry to embarrass the Government, and he was willing to bear witness to their desire to meet the evil to the utmost of their power. In the part of the country he represented, the prices of every thing were full three times what they would have been in ordinary times; landlords did not receive half their rents, and generously relinquished the difference. He adjured the noble Lord to give political economy to the winds, and to listen to the submissive voices of a starving people.

Sir R. PEEL: Sir, I am not about to interrupt the unanimity with which there is every prospect that this Address to the Crown will be carried, nor am I about to protract the discussion which has arisen upon it. There is scarcely one of the topics introduced into the Speech from the Throne, which may not be more advantageously debated upon a future occasion, the speedy advent of which has been promised us by the noble Lord. The noble Lord has stated, that with respect to the diplomatic transactions which were adverted to in the Speech from the Throne, concerning the marriage which has been entered into between the Son of the King of the French and the Infanta the Princess of Spain, the whole of that correspondence shall be laid before the House. The correspondence which has already appeared in the French papers is, I apprehend, only a part of the correspondence which the noble Lord intends to lay on the Table. I hope that the noble Lord will lay all the documents before the House which he can produce without detriment to the public interest, including all the documents which will be explanatory of the views and conduct of the late Government. Considering that the discussion of this subject will be more satisfactory on a future occasion, I shall abstain from any other reference to it than to confirm entirely the statement of the noble Lord, that, during the time the late Government were in office, no effort was made on the part of England to bring forward a Prince of Coburg as a candidate for the hand of the Queen of Spain. Sir, speaking for myself, I deprecate any such connection. I do not think that the interest of England would be promoted by such an alliance, the natural consequence of which might be to involve us more deeply in the domestic concerns of Spain than would be at all desirable. My belief is, that it would be for the interests of England and of Europe that Spain should be really independent; that she should maintain the high position which she once held among nations, without tolerating the interference in her internal administration of any foreign Power; and I hope to see the day when Spain will place herself in such a position of independence. But, Sir, speaking of the late Government, I repeat, that neither directly, by any official act of that Government, nor, by any indirect means, was any attempt resorted to by any party for the purpose of advancing the interest of a prince of the house of Coburg. I shall say but little on this occasion with respect to the extinction of the independence of Cracow, because I expect that we shall be soon in possession of more information on that question. But I cannot avoid expressing my deep regret that the extinction of the independence of that State has taken place. And here I would wish to make an observation on the statement of the hon. Gentleman who spoke last. Supposing that statement to be correct, supposing there to have been instances wherein the stipulations of conventions incorporated in general treaties have not been strictly observed, still there cannot be a doubt that by the Treaty of Vienna a public assurance was given to Europe, at the period when the settlement of its affairs took place—a public assurance as binding as any formal engagement could be—that that last remnant of Polish independence should be respected, and that Cracow should not be destined to the fate to which she is now doomed. There has been a virtual departure from the engagements then entered into. The Act itself, independent of the violation of the Treaty, is a most impolitic one. For three great Powers to declare they are unable to protect themselves from the dangers with which they may be threatened within the territory of Cracow, is sufficiently humiliating. Even after the recent disturbances, it would have been wiser to restore to Cracow, in the greatest plenitude, every right and privilege accorded and secured to it by the Treaty of Vienna. Had such rights and privileges been again abused—had the three great Powers proved their inability to take effectual precautions against machinations concocted in Cracow—then, upon consultation with France, Great Britain, Sweden, and the other parties to the Treaty of Vienna, and upon its being made manifest that there existed on the part of Cracow a deep determination to disturb the peace of its neighbours by countenancing machinations against them, the public feeling of Europe would have seconded those Powers in making a new arrangement for the government of Cracow, and the consent of France and of England might have been obtained to the measure which, without their participation, has now been carried out. As it now is, I think there is no sufficient proof of danger to those Northern Powers to be apprehended from Cracow, which can be accepted as a sufficient justification of the act committed, without concert or communication with other Powers, parties to the Treaties of Vienna. Austria is the last Power of Europe which should set an example calculated to shake the confidence of Europe in the permanent maintenance of the provisions of that treaty, which forms the basis of the present settlement of Europe. Now, Sir, with regard to other portions of the Speech from the Throne, I regret some omissions; I am sorry that no reference is made to the state of the revenue. I should have been glad to know, before we were called upon to consider the extent of the expenditure, what were the views of Her Majesty's Government; and I think it would have been as well had some reference been made to our financial matters. I have heard one subject adverted to with great satisfaction—that it is the intention of Government to direct the attention of Parliament to the sanitary condition of the kingdom. With the exception of Ireland, I can conceive no subject deeper or more vitally interesting to the happiness, to the health, and permanent welfare of the great masses of the population of this country, than improvements in the sanitary condition of the towns. I hope that the measure will be an extensive one; not confined to the populations of large towns merely, but extended to small places; and that the municipal authorities of all towns will have power to make those improvements which are most wanted, and the absence of which is highly prejudicial to the comfort and health of the inhabitants. Now, with respect to Ireland, on a full recollection of all the difficulties which encompass a Government, in having to deal with such a crisis as we now witness in that country, so far from entertaining any hostile feeling, I am disposed, on the contrary, to make every allowance for the position of those who are responsible for meeting such an emergency. I know what is the peculiar embarrassment with which they had to deal—how difficult it is, at an early period of the year, to ascertain the exact amount of distress—what danger there may be, either by taking superfluous precautions, of causing undue alarm, and of disturbing the ordinary course of mercantile operations; and, on the other hand, what danger there may be in apparent negligence, from the too sanguine expectation of abundance. I know how heavy is the responsibility that falls on the Government having to contend with famine and its fearful consequences; and, therefore, not only on account of the recent period at which the right hon. Gentlemen have been called upon to administer public affairs, but from the real difficulties with which any Government has to contend, I am disposed to make every allowance for any error they may have committed. We should recollect that we are now made wise by the event, and that it may be easy for us now, seeing the extent of the evil, not only impending but actually present, to suggest some mode of combating the enormous difficulty before us, more likely to succeed than that which was resorted to at a period of doubt and uncertainty. We ought to place ourselves in their position in the month of September last, and then consider whether we would, in the then state of our knowledge, have been able to suggest any better course than they adopted. Sir, I do not blame the Government for not calling Parliament together earlier. I believe that nothing can be done or will be done in Ireland without the active, and earnest, and unremitting co-operation of the landed proprietors of that country, and that their withdrawal from Ireland at a critical moment might have increased the evil. Sir, I believe also that it might have been unwise to create alarm by too early an interference on the part of Parliament. As events have turned out, I regret that the measures now proposed were not proposed at an earlier period; but I cannot but feel that though no compact was entered into on the subject, still that after the recent arrangement made with respect to the corn laws in the last Session, the noble

Lord and those with whom he is acting would be unwilling to disturb the decision and arrangement that had been so recently come to. Again, with respect to the Labour-rate Act, we are now fully aware of the magnitude of the evil that has grown up under that Act; but, as I said before, in order to judge of the intentions of the Government, we are not to test them by the circumstances now existing, but by the circumstances and prospects of the time when the measure was introduced to Parliament. The right hon. Gentleman has, however, convinced me by his speech to-night that the sooner we disturb the present relations between the labour and the Government of the country the better. When he states, that many thousand persons are employed in superintending this labour, he only the more convinces me of the danger of such a system. I can conceive what it is to have a staff of thousands of head clerks and engineers in Ireland—what the difficulty of selection must be—and, with every care on the part of the authorities, how little qualified for their duty must be the majority of ten thousand public officers hastily appointed. I am satisfied, therefore, that the sooner the right hon. Gentleman can restore these gentlemen to their ordinary occupations, and save the expense of their salaries, the better both for this country and for Ireland. The first object to which we ought to direct our attention is, the restoring to its natural state the relation between labour and those who employ it. When there are 430,000 persons employed in Ireland by the State at the enormous expense of 158,000*l.* a week, it is clear that something should at once be done. We should endeavour to direct this labour first to the immediate cultivation of the soil, in order that we may have the prospect of a future harvest; and then, when this prospect shall be tolerably certain, to the permanent improvement of the soil—a subject, though of inferior consideration to the former, still of much more importance than any public works. There are instances in which Government can employ labour in Ireland with great advantage upon public works; but where the works themselves are not beneficial, the diversion on an enormous scale of labour from its ordinary occupation can entail nothing but evil. Therefore the first effect which I hope will be realized by the measures which the noble Lord contemplates will be to restore the natural relation between the employer of labour and the employed; and I do hope that the landed proprietors of Ireland and the occupying tenants also will feel that it is of the utmost importance to assist the Government in diverting the labour of the country, in the first place, from what are now called public works, to the cultivation of the soil, and afterwards to its permanent improvement. The noble Lord proposes three measures: the suspension for a time of the existing duties on the importation of corn—the suspension of the navigation laws—and the permission to use molasses and sugar in breweries and distilleries. It is my intention to give my cordial support to these measures. The advantages to be derived from them may not now be so great as if they had been introduced at an earlier period, and before the French and other Governments had entered into the market as purchasers of grain. Still we are bound to do everything in our power, by reducing the duty, to increase the supply of food. As stated in the Speech from the Throne, there has been a great deficiency of food in other countries —in Germany, Belgium, and France; and as measures have been devised in those countries to increase as much as possible their supply, it is possible that cargoes which might be diverted to other countries by the 4*s.* duty here, may be retained in this country by the abolition of the duty. With regard to corn the produce of Egypt, and other distant countries, a temporary suspension of the navigation laws may be highly advantageous. But feeling enters into this question as well as reason; and seeing the rapid rise in the price of corn; seeing that there are—I won't say hundreds, but—many persons daily dying from starvation in Ireland; seeing that, although outrages exist in greater number than before, on the whole these severe privations have been borne with great patience; looking to the state of that suffering but uncomplaining country, Scotland; knowing as we do that in the Western Islands and Highlands of that country the severest distress exists, although it is scarcely brought under our cognizance by a murmur: seeing all this, I shall not object, to the immediate adoption of any measure, which those responsible for rescuing the country from its perilous position, may think it necessary to advise and recommend. With respect to measures of a permanent character for the improvement of Ireland, it would be premature at this moment to enter upon any discussion of them. The noble Lord has promised, on an early day, to make a statement of these measures to the House; and I am unwilling to embarrass his course by provoking any discussion prematurely on the matter. But we must not be too sanguine in reference to the immediate efficacy of such measures of permanent relief. The evils which we are now called upon to combat are of long standing, and no instant remedy can be applied to them. Take a very favourite suggestion, for instance—emigration to other countries. The relief from it must be partial and remote. Before such a system can be pursued to advantage, you must have previous communications with those countries to which you direct the emigrant, whom you cannot turn loose in any colony without previous preparation. That a well-considered system of emigration, gradually adopted, and steadily pursued, would add to the strength of British power in the colonies, and operate as a relief at home, cannot be denied. But he would be too sanguine who would suppose that any scheme immediately adopted, no matter how extensively and eagerly carried out, would tend very materially to mitigate the present evils which press upon Ireland. The present misfortune is one of so surpassing a magnitude, that it would be unjust as well as impolitic to make Ireland alone responsible for it. I am willing to consent that this part of the empire shall bear its proportion of the burden. But it must be recollected that the Government has no fund of its own from which relief can be obtained, and that a grant of money for the purpose of relieving Ireland is neither more nor less than an increase to the taxation which presses upon the different classes of this country. But, on account of the peculiar nature of the present emergency, I am sure that the people of this country will not refuse to bear their share in mitigating the evils which at this moment are so heavily pressing upon certain portions of the empire. At the same time I must say, that nothing could be more injurious to Ireland herself than misplaced and ill-judged liberality toward her. Ireland should feel it incumbent upon herself to make great exertions for the maintenance of her own poor. An habitual dependence for relief upon this country is not only unjust to us, but fails to benefit Ireland herself. Every class in that country should entertain a due sense of their several obligations, and assisted, as they have a right to be, by wise and provident legislation, they should neither seek nor require to transfer to this country the burden which properly appertains to themselves. I shall certainly approach this whole subject, when it comes more in detail before us, in a spirit such as is properly recommended in the Speech from the Throne—a spirit free from all party feelings or considerations. Our own interests are most intimately connected with the welfare and prosperity of Ireland. Ireland cannot be a depressed suffering country without England suffering almost to an equal degree. We have, therefore, the highest interest in promoting the welfare and conducing to the prosperity of Ireland; and I, for one, shall sincerely congratulate Her Majesty's Government, if, respecting the rights of property, they may be able, by wise and provident legislation, to make permanent provision for the improvement of Ireland.

VISCOUNT PALMERSTON: I rise, Mr. Speaker, to say a few words in reference to the Treaty of Vienna, which has been brought forward so conspicuously by the hon. Gentleman the Member for Shrewsbury (Mr. Disraeli). It is not my intention to enter at present into any discussion of the whole subject, or to refer very particularly to the conduct of Her Majesty's Government, inasmuch as this is not the proper opportunity for so doing. But, Sir, it is impossible for me to acquiesce, or appear to acquiesce, by silence in the interpretation given by the hon. Member for Shrewsbury, to the stipulations of the Treaty of Vienna. It seems to me, that if his interpretation of the treaty be just, there is no treaty at all. The hon. Member has so disconnected the details of that engagement, that if the treaty has any existence at all, I am curious to know what portion or portions of the instrument he considers to be valid. The hon. Member stated that the Treaty of Vienna was only a compilation of separate and distinct instruments, contracted by different parties, at other times, and in other places, and that it was a sort of general registry, which involved no obligations; and then, on the other hand, the hon. Member contended that several of the parties to it stood in the relation of guarantees. There is no general guarantee in the Treaty of Vienna. There is a special guarantee for certain arrangements between Prussia and Saxony; but with regard to the other arrangements of the treaty, the contracting parties thereto are not guarantees. There is, therefore, no obligation pressing upon these parties to take active measures to enforce the stipulations of the treaty. They may have the right to do so, but they are not obliged to do so. The hon. Gentleman is mistaken in regard to the bearing of the Treaty of Vienna upon the question of Cracow. He fancies that the arrangements by which Cracow was erected into an independent and free State, are entirely contained in a separate treaty between the three Powers, to which the other parties were not contracting parties. If the hon. Member will look into the Treaty of Vienna, he will find that this is not so. He will see that the 6th, 7th, 8th, 9th, and 10th articles of the general Treaty relate to, and constitute the free and independent State of Cracow. [Mr. DISRAELI: They were copies.] They were articles of the general treaty, and were as much portions of that treaty, as it was signed by the contracting parties thereto, as were any of the other stipulations which it contained. But if this is so, the hon. Member contends that the arrangements with regard to the free navigation of the rivers must also be a portion of this treaty. It has been so construed by all the Powers of Europe. In the same way, the regulations with regard to the precedence of diplomatic persons must be part of the treaty. Ministers took precedence according to the date of their arrival at the Court to which they were accredited. That was a portion of the Treaty of Vienna, and any violation of the rule would of course be considered a violation of the treaty. Now, Sir, with regard to what passed about Belgium, I may state that it was not Earl Grey's Government which established the conference. The two first protocols were signed, not by me, but by Lord Aberdeen. But that separation of Belgium from Holland was effected not in the way in which the extinction of Cracow has been attempted. It was effected by long negotiations, to which all the Powers interested were parties, and was the result of a regular treaty signed by those Powers interested in the transaction to which it related. As regards the Treaty of Utrecht, it has been stated by the noble Lord opposite, that the renunciation of the Duke of Orleans and the Duke de Berry, were not valid, because they were not part of the municipal law of France and Spain. But the noble Lord was mistaken, for these renunciations were in fact part of the municipal law of these two countries. [Lord G. BENTINCK: It was not I who said they were not.] Well, then, some one else in the course of debate did; but the assertion is not consistent with fact, and I wish it to be clearly understood that the ground taken by Government is not that there was anything in the Treaty of Utrecht which forbade marriages between the royal families of the two countries. The ground taken is this: that the renunciations of the Treaty of Utrecht, and the laws by which they were sanctioned, prevent the succession to the Crown of Spain of any descendant of the Duke of Orleans. As I said already, it is not my intention to enter into a discussion of these transactions. I shall be prepared, when papers are laid before the House, and hon. Members are in possession of the facts, I shall be prepared to defend the conduct of Her Majesty's Government; but I could not allow the interpretation put upon these treaties to pass, without offering a few dissentient remarks.

Address agreed to, and a Committee appointed to draw it up. To be reported to-morrow.

House adjourned shortly after One o'clock.

HOUSE OF COMMONS,

Wednesday, January 20, 1847.

MINUTES.] NEW WRIT.—For Middlesex, *v.* George Byng, Esq., deceased.

PETITIONS PRESENTED. From Bristol, for the Adoption of Measures for the Transportation of Grain and Provisions to Ireland.—From London, for Allowing the Use of Sugar and Molasses by Brewers and Distillers.—From Dover, for Amendment of the Law relating to Promiscuous Intercourse. From Chester, for Amendment of the Poor Law.—From the Brecknock Union, for Amendment of the Poor Law (Ireland), and for Alteration of the Law of Settlement.

SESSIONAL ORDERS.—PRIVATE BILLS.

MR. PARKER moved the usual Sessional Orders, the usual Resolution for the arrangement of Public Business in respect of Orders and Notices, and the Resolution for Morning Sittings on Wednesdays, which were read by the Speaker and agreed to.

MR. EWART rose to move the following addition to the Sessional Orders:—

> "That Committees on all Private Bills, as well as on Railway Bills, consist of Five Members, neither personally nor indirectly interested in the Question submitted to their consideration."

He considered that it was the duty of the House to take every possible precaution to place those tribunals which were called upon to decide upon Private Bills beyond the suspicion of partiality. The first step which was taken to insure the impartiality of these tribunals was the system adopted by the House, on the suggestion of Mr. Gladstone, to appoint five impartial and unbiassed Members on all Committees relating to completed Railway Bills. That system had answered most satisfactorily; and during the last Session of Parliament he made a proposition, which was afterwards taken up by the Government and adopted, for submitting all Railway Bills to Committees consisting of five unbiassed and unprejudiced persons. The question was, whether this system had worked so well that it ought to be extended to Committees on all Private Bills; and it appeared to him that the plan had worked so satisfactorily with reference to Railway Bills, that he was fully justified in bringing forward the Resolution he had proposed. He believed the public fully concurred in this opinion, and that they were satisfied the duties of Committeemen on Private Bills were discharged far better by unbiassed Members than by Members whose constituents were locally interested in the questions brought before them, and who were formerly placed upon all Private Bill Committees. He was aware that some hon. Gentleman might object to his Motion, on the ground that it was desirable that matters of local interest should be referred to Members acquainted with the circumstances of the different localities; but, for his own part, he could see no distinction in this respect between Railway Bills and other Private Bills.

Mr. THORNELY, in seconding the Motion, observed that the present system of conducting private business relating to Railway Bills had given entire satisfaction to the country, and he wished to see it extended to all Private Bills.

Mr. BROTHERTON said, that as the plan adopted last Session, of referring all Railway Bills to disinterested persons, had had a very short trial, he thought it was at present premature to extend the new system to all Private Bills. He considered that there was a wide distinction between Railway Bills and other local Bills. Railway Bills might affect a large extent of country, and that might be a reason why they should be submitted to an impartial tribunal, entirely exempt from any local interest or influence; but when the Bills related to improvements to be effected in towns, as, for instance, to the erection of markets, he thought that the local Members, or the representatives of the neighbouring counties, were as well qualified as any other persons to be Members of the Committee. He was convinced that the adoption of the Motion of his hon. Friend the Member for Dumfries would be attended with very injurious effects. The present system of transacting private business worked satisfactorily; and it was necessary in many cases that the Members for the districts which would be affected by local Bills, should be upon the Committees, in order fairly to represent the interests of their constituents. He should oppose the Motion.

Mr. HUME regretted that his hon. Friend (Mr. Brotherton) felt it his duty to object to this Motion. For his own part, he would state that he never wished to be upon any Committee called on to decide upon a matter in which his constituents were concerned. There were very often two parties in all these local matters, and Members who were not disposed to trim, sometimes did not know what to do. He did not mean to say he had never been in such a situation, but he thought Members ought not to be liable to be placed in it. He would support the Motion of his hon. Friend, for he considered that the measure proposed would give the country far greater confidence in the justice and impartiality of the decisions of their Committees.

Mr. R. YORKE cordially supported the Motion. To adopt it would evince a desire to render the honour and independence of Members of that House more unquestionable than at present.

Colonel SIBTHORP had always felt, and he still entertained the opinion, that it was almost impossible to obtain impartial Committees on Private Bills, and especially Railway Bills. He considered that it would be impossible to prevent fraud and partiality in such matters, unless all Members appointed to sit on Railway Committees were called to the Table, and sworn that they were neither directly nor indirectly interested in any railways whose interests might be brought under their consideration. He wished to see a pure House, and a pure Ministry; he wished to see independent men exerting themselves for the benefit of the country, uninfluenced by any private feelings. Till they had such a House of Commons, hon. Gentlemen might be assured that they would not possess the confidence of the country. He had lost all confidence in the late Ministry, and he entertained great suspicion of the Gentlemen who had taken their places. He fully concurred in the Resolution of the hon.

Member for Dumfries; and he would subscribe to any Motion, made by any Member of that House, which would tend to purify the present system of conducting private business, and establish independent tribunals.

MR. W. PATTEN thought the House should pause before it adopted this Resolution, and should give the system adopted last Session a further trial before extending it to all Private Bill Committees. He knew that some persons viewed the proposal with considerable apprehension; but there was great difference of opinion on the subject. He believed that the infusion of independent Members into Railway Committees had given much satisfaction; but, as he thought the experiment commenced last Session ought to have a somewhat longer trial, he would vote against the Motion of the hon. Member for Dumfries.

MR. W. WILLIAMS was in favour of the Motion, thinking that no tribunal of the kind could be too impartial.

MR. NEWDEGATE resisted the Motion, mainly on the ground that to adopt it would tend to increase the expenses of parties concerned in Private Bills.

MR. BERNAL considered that hon. Members would be greatly degraded if they were to be reduced to the position of agents and advocates of local interests in Committees of that House. The House last year determined that preliminary inquiries into local matters relating to Railway Bills should be made by certain public departments under whose peculiar province they fell. He believed that the only public department which had yet commenced these inquiries was the Woods and Forests. If, however, this system of inquiry were carried out, there would be no necessity for making Members of Parliament the advocates of local interests in Committees of that House.

SIR G. GREY said, that great difference of opinion existed on this subject both in and out of the House; and, though his own opinion was in favour of the principle of the proposal of the hon. Member for Dumfries, he considered that great caution and deliberation were necessary before any steps were taken in the matter. The Railway Committees had worked extremely well since they had been reduced to five independent Members; but there was a great difference between the subject-matter of Railway Bills and of Bills exclusively of a local nature. It must be remembered that the change with reference to the constitution of Railway Committees was not effected by a mere Sessional Order, but was adopted by the House after a careful inquiry before a Committee. He saw no ground for believing, with the hon. Member for Warwickshire, that the expense of Private Bills would thus be augmented. On the contrary, he (Sir G. Grey) thought that money had been saved by the change made last year.

DR. BOWRING thought the plan proposed by the hon. Member (Mr. Ewart) judicious, but suggested the adjournment of the debate, for the sake of consideration.

MR. EWART said, that if the Government would not oppose the reference of the question to a Select Committee, he would withdraw his present Motion for the purpose of moving that the subject be referred to a Select Committee.

SIR G. GREY said, that the hon. Member must give notice of the latter Motion before moving it. If, when it was brought forward, sufficient grounds should be shown for it, the House would doubtless agree to it.

MR. EWART asked leave to withdraw his Motion, with the view of giving notice of a Motion for a Select Committee tomorrow; but the House, objecting to it, divided on the Question, that the words be inserted:—Ayes 36; Noes 103: Majority 67.

List of the AYES.

Aglionby, H. A.
Allix, J. P.
Arkwright, G.
Bernal, R.
Bowring, Dr.
Bright, J.
Brown, W.
Christie, W. D.
Clay, Sir W.
Collett, J.
Crawford, W. S.
Dennistoun, J.
Divett, E.
Duncan, Visct.
Duncan, G.
Duncombe, T.
Escott, B.
Etwall, R.
Ferrand, W. B.
Fielden, J.
Gill, T.
Greene, T.
Hume, J.
James, Sir W. C.
Napier, Sir C.
Osborne, R.
Paget, Col.
Pechell, Capt.
Rawdon, Col.
Scrope, G. P.
Sibthorp, Col.
Stanton, W. H.
Trelawny, J. S.
Williams, W.
Wood, Col. T.
Yorke, H. R.

TELLERS.

Ewart, W.
Thornely, T.

List of the NOES.

Bailey, J. jun.
Baine, W.
Bankes, G.
Barclay, D.
Baring, right hon. F.
Barnard, E. G.
Berkeley, Capt.
Bernard, Visct.
Bodkin, W. H.
Borthwick, P.
Bowles, Adm.
Brotherton, J.
Cardwell, E.
Christopher, R. A.

Clifton, J. T.
Clive, Visct.
Colebrooke, T. E.
Compton, H. C.
Cowper, W. F.
Craig, W. G.
Dickinson, F. H.
Douglas, Sir H.
Douglas, Sir C. E.
Douglas, J. D. S.
Duckworth, J. T.
Dundas, Adm.
Dundas, D.
Ferguson, R. A.
Finch, G.
Forbes, W.
French, F.
Gardner, J. D.
Gibson, T. M.
Goring, C.
Goulburn, H.
Grey, Sir G.
Grimsditch, T.
Hanmer, Sir J.
Hastie, A.
Hildyard, T. B. T.
Hill, Lord M.
Hindley, C.
Hobhouse, Sir J.
Hodgson, R.
Hope, Sir J.
Hope, G. W.
Howard, C. W. G.
Howard, P. H.
Hutt, W.
Inglis, Sir R. H.
James, W.
Jolliffe, Sir W. G.
Labouchere, H.
Lascelles, W. S.
Layard, Capt.
Lefroy, A.
Le Marchant, Sir D.
Lincoln, Earl of
Loch, J.
Lockhart, A. E.
Lygon, hon. Gen.
Maitland, T.
Manners, Lord J.
Maule, rt. hon. F.
Morpeth, Visct.
Mostyn, hon. E.
O'Brien, A. S.
O'Brien, W. S.
O'Conor Don
Ord, W.
Packe, C. W.
Pakington, Sir J.
Palmerston, Visct.
Parker, J.
Peel, J.
Philips, G. R.
Phillpotts, J.
Plumptre, J. P.
Plumridge, Capt.
Reid, Col.
Rice, E. R.
Ross, D. R.
Russell, Lord J.
Rutherfurd, A.
Seymour, Sir H.
Smith, J. A.
Smith, rt. hon. R.
Somerset, Lord G.
Somerville, Sir W.
Spooner, R.
Stansfield, W. R.
Strutt, E.
Sutton, hon. H. M.
Trollope, Sir J.
Tufnell, H.
Vane, Lord H.
Wall, C. B.
Ward, H. G.
Wawn, J. T.
Wodehouse, E.
Wood, hon. Sir C.
Wortley. hon. J. S.
Wrightson, W. B.

TELLERS.

Patten, W.
Newdegate, N.

IRON SHIPS.

Mr. R. YORKE asked the hon. Secretary to the Admiralty whether it were true that sixteen iron ships of war had been ordered to be built without previous inquiry of their powers and efficiency for the service; and whether the report of the Admiralty of France, showing the utter inefficiency of iron ships for the purposes of war, was not in the possession of the Government at the time the said ships were ordered?

Mr. WARD said, that the question rather referred to the past Government than the present; but he might state that a return of iron ships of war laid down and launched since the beginning of 1840 had been ordered last night on the Motion of the hon. and gallant Member for Marylebone. With regard to the latter part of the hon. Gentleman's question, he was not aware of any report of the French Admiralty showing the inefficiency of iron ships for warfare, or of any extensive experiments having been tried on the subject.

AGRICULTURAL STATISTICS.

Mr. STAFFORD O'BRIEN begged to ask a question of the hon. Vice-President of the Board of Trade in reference to agricultural statistics. Soon after the hon. Gentleman accepted office, he had asked the hon. Gentleman whether this question would occupy the attention of the Government during the recess; and he now wished to know whether the subject of agricultural statistics had so occupied the consideration of the Government; and also whether it was the intention of the Government to bring forward any plan whereby those statistics could be obtained?

Mr. M. GIBSON said, that during the recess the subject of agricultural statistics had received the attention of the Government, and a measure was now in progress in respect to it. Certain details were not yet decided on, but he had every hope that a Bill on the subject would be submitted to Parliament at an early period.

POOR REMOVAL ACT.

Captain PECHELL moved for a return from each poor-law union and parish in England and Wales of the number of non-resident families and persons who were in receipt of relief on the 26th day of August, 1846, distinguishing those who have since become chargeable to the unions and parishes in which they were residing at the time. He said that this Motion had become necessary in consequence of the extraordinary operation of the Poor Removal Act. Its working in the district with which he was connected, and he believed throughout the country, had caused utter confusion, and the greatest dissatisfaction to all parties, except what were called the legal authorities. He believed its object was a humane one, but, owing to the decision given by the Attorney and Solicitor General, very great mischief had been done by it throughout the country. He was told at the time that he was not humane for voting against the Bill; but he would now ask those who supported it, what they thought of the operation of a measure which only fed the lawyers and those who preyed upon the plunder of the country? A number of persons, being non-residents, had been most cruelly treated by the poor-law unions in country places, which by common consent had joined together, suspended the relief of the non-resident poor, and thrown them on the parishes with respect to which they had a residence. Some parishes with a more humane feeling, agreed not to proceed on the Act at all; but then they had to provide both for their non-resident poor, and also for the poor thrown back upon them. In the borough with which he was connected there were 1,110 families, consisting of 3,000 persons, who were relieved out of doors at a cost of 298*l.* per week; and out of this number there were 523 families, consisting of 1,452 persons, who had been thrown on the parish in consequence of the operation of this Act, and the decision of the Crown lawyers. He thought it would have been more fitting to have made reference in the Speech from the Throne to an Act like this than to the Local Courts Act.

MR. G. BANKES seconded the Motion with pleasure: it was his intention to bring the subject fairly before the House on Friday, in the shape of an Amendment to the Motion of the noble Lord (Lord J. Russell) for a Select Committee on the Law of Settlement, and to submit to the House a proposition for the immediate repeal of this Bill, which was at the present moment doing the greatest mischief throughout the country. He held in his hand a petition from one of the parishes in the county with which he was connected —a parish greatly injured by the operation of this Bill; he believed in a few days he should have petitions from almost every parish in that county. The petition related to that which he considered by much the least important portion of the grievance, namely, the additional burden thrown upon the ratepayers; the more important portion by far was that which had just been adverted to—the cruel injury inflicted upon the poor themselves. Those who ventured to suggest objections to this Act when it was under discussion as a Bill—and he had been one of the number—had no conception that the mischief would be so great as it had proved. He felt that he should not do his duty if he did not take the very earliest opportunity of submitting to the House the propriety of repealing the measure. If it should be said that this was one of the subjects to be submitted to the proposed Select Committee, he must reply, that during its deliberations these grievances ought not to continue; and, therefore, agreeing entirely in the propriety of the noble Lord's Motion for a full consideration of the Law of Settlement, he should venture to submit an Amendment, that the Select Committee should be appointed to inquire into the operation of the Act 9 and 10 Victoria, c. 66, as affecting the comfort and condition of the poor. He believed that in a very short time they would see that the mischiefs of this law were of such a nature that it would be their duty to recommend that it should not continue for another hour on the Statute-book without material alteration. The general subject of the law of settlement was one of great importance, and could not be very speedily determined. But every county Member, and the Members for all large places, could corroborate what he had said of the mischievous effect of the Act of last Session; they needed no report of any committee to make them acquainted with that which stared them in the face—a mischief arising from a statute which undoubtedly was passed with the most benevolent intentions.

SIR G. GREY had no objection to the returns being granted. As notice had just been given by the hon. Member (Mr. G. Bankes) that he would, on Friday, bring distinctly before the House the subject of the operation of the Poor Removal Act, by specific Motion, neither he nor the House would, perhaps, think him (Sir G. Grey) wanting in respect if he suggested that the matter should not at present be further discussed. On the Motion, on Friday, he should be prepared to state the course which the Government would adopt.

MR. FERRAND hoped he might be allowed to call attention to the great cruelty inflicted on the poor, especially in the manufacturing districts, by the conduct of the new poor-law auditors, who were acting under the direction of the Poor Law Commissioners. When he told the right hon. Gentleman what had occurred in his own parish, and added, that it was not an isolated fact, but occurring in every large manufacturing town in Yorkshire and Lancashire, he thought he should convince both the right hon. Gentleman and the House, that the Government ought instantly to interfere, and rescue the distressed operatives from the clutches of the Commissioners and their auditors. It had been usual, from time immemorial, in the parish with which he was connected, for the ratepayers annually to direct the constable of the town to relieve any case of urgent distress with which he met: for instance, if in the night time he found a person lying out of doors in the street, without the means of procuring a bed, he was to take that destitute person to a lodging-house, pay for his bed, provide him with victuals, and give him a trifling sum to pass him on the road towards his destination, whatever that might be. But, in spite of this leave given by the ratepayers, the auditor of the Keighley union had apprised the constable, that if he should again be guilty of any such offence, and dare to relieve a person under such circumstances, though he might be dying of want, the constable's accounts should not be passed, and he should pay the money out of his own pocket. The consequence was, that the poor were knocked about from pillar to post; they knew not where to fly for protection; the board of guardians told them they had now no authority—that they were worse used than ever at Somerset House—that formerly they had some control over the poor rates, but that now they had none. These auditors had literally given notice to the boards of guardians, that they would commence actions against them if they were guilty of the slightest act of charity contrary to the instructions from Somerset House; and there was a feeling now springing up in the north of England, that the poor had no means of escape from misery and starvation. He had frequently brought such things before the notice of the House; he did so with more cheerfulness now, because on occasions when the interests of the poor were being discussed within those walls, he had seen the right hon. Gentleman the present Home Secretary exhibit a feeling of humanity which, he was sorry to say, he did not see exhibited by the late Home Secretary. He felt convinced that the right hon. Gentleman would immediately take steps to inquire into the truth of the statement which had just been made in his presence; and if it should be denied by the Commissioners, the evidence of the constable himself should be forthcoming. When the right hon. Gentleman found the statement to be accurate, it was to be hoped he would put a stop to such cruelty and oppression.

Mr. ESCOTT rose to confirm the statement, that the conduct of guardians in some unions was driving the poor from one parish to another, without their obtaining relief; and at the same time to observe, that the greatest cruelties inflicted upon the poor during this very inclement season arose from the crass ignorance of boards of guardians, and their laziness in failing to make themselves acquainted with the provisions of the law which they were called upon to administer. There was no case of suffering such as the hon. Member had described, in which the guardians had not, under the present law, full power to grant relief out of the house. It had been the practice to refuse it, but there was no law to that effect. The Poor Law Amendment Act did not say one word about prohibiting out-door relief. There was an order issued by the Commissioners prohibiting it—[Mr. FERRAND: Is not that law?]—but that rule had appended to it certain exceptions, one of which included cases of sudden and urgent necessity. When that rule was promulgated, he went to the right hon. Gentleman the then Home Secretary, and remarked that the exception gave the guardians all the power which they could fairly wish to have, if they were to be allowed to construe the exception, and to say what was and what was not a case of urgent necessity. That right hon. Gentleman promised to consider and state publicly whether that was so; and after an interval of a day or two, he stated in the House that the boards of guardians were the only persons who had a right to construe and give effect to the words in question. What right, then, had the guardians to tell poor persons, reduced to necessity by the loss of the potato crop, three-fourths of their winter food, that they could not relieve them out of the house? He, in the union in which he was an *ex-officio* guardian, had carried a proposition to grant such persons out-door relief, and the Poor Law Commissioners had sanctioned every such act, and refused to interfere with the discretion of the board of guardians. It was most important that at the present time of distress, with the apprehension afloat that it was likely to be increased between this and next harvest, the boards of guardians should know their power, and that the ratepayers should understand that if a board did not exercise this power, the board and not the Commisioners ought to be blamed for any misfortune or distress which was the consequence.

Mr. SPOONER thought the hon. Member (Mr. Escott) mistaken in his law. It was right that boards of guardians should know their powers, but it was right also that they should know the powers given to the auditor. The auditor could disallow charges for such relief as this, and make the relieving officer pay them out of his own pocket. He (Mr. Spooner) knew several instances where that had been done; he knew one in Worcestershire, where, in a case of distress, the guardians ordered immediate relief to a family, and the auditor struck the item out, and the relieving officer had to pay it out of his own pocket. But it was not the intention of the framers of the poor law, that one man should have the power of refusing to allow relief to be given, when the board of guardians had thought it right that it should be given; and if the House were aware of the facts as they occurred, they would not suffer the law to remain as it was.

Mr. BORTHWICK believed that the hon. Member for Winchester (Mr. Escott) had correctly stated the law, and that the auditors had no power to refuse confirming the orders of the board of guardians. In the Worcestershire instance, the auditor must have acted illegally, and he had rendered himself liable to penalties. But the poor were suffering under these illegal acts; and the noble Lord should remember, when he came to make his statement on Friday, that these were abuses for which the present law had afforded facility, and the recurrence of which should be provided against.

Motion agreed to.

SUGAR IN BREWERIES AND DISTILLERIES.

Mr. CHRISTOPHER inquired whether the Government intended to ask the House on Friday for a permanent or a temporary measure with regard to the employment of sugar in breweries and distilleries?

Lord J. RUSSELL answered, that the Government intended to move a resolution empowering the use of sugar in breweries and distilleries absolutely, and afterwards, if the House should agree to that resolution, to propose a Bill to carry it into effect. They would not propose that there should be any limit in point of time; indeed their object was that it should be a permanent law. It would be perfectly competent to the hon. Member, by a clause in the Bill, or in any manner he should think proper, to propose that it should be for a limited time; and he (Lord J. Russell) should be quite ready then to give the question consideration. Not that he meant to say that the Government would propose the measure otherwise than as a permanent measure; but it might be a question for consideration whether or not it were advisable to pass a Bill in the first instance for a short time, proposing afterwards to continue it and make it a permanent measure. That was a question upon which he should be desirous to hear the hon. Member's opinion.

THE ADDRESS—REPORT.

Mr. C. HOWARD brought up the Report on the Address to Her Majesty.

On the Question that it be read a Second Time,

Mr. HUME rose to avow that a portion of the censure thrown on the Government upon the previous night ought to have been directed against him, inasmuch as it was he that called upon the Government to give what had been designated "a fatal pledge," but which he, on the contrary, thought most salutary. If it had not been maintained, there would have been great additional inconvenience and annoyance sustained in Ireland. If the Government had become purchasers of corn and provisions, and retailers of them in different parts of the country, the House, which had heard that 10,000 individuals were employed in regulating labour, might rest assured that twice that number would not have sufficed. He therefore felt called upon to express approbation at what the Government had done. He had protested against the payment of money for public works in Ireland, and had endeavoured to persuade the Government not to interfere with them. He was quite prepared to vote grants of money to the landed gentry in Ireland, by which they might be enabled to give employment to the people upon their estates; for his opinion had ever been that such relief or employment ought to be afforded through the medium of relief committees, composed of the landed gentry, who should be responsible for the money expended on the land. It was quite true that circumstances might have arisen, such as the calamity which had taken place, when the question might be raised as to what extent the national funds ought to be charged for relief; but, as a principle, he had ever held that the poor ought to be maintained by the land itself. No man sympathized more than he did with the calamity which had fallen upon Ireland. That calamity had not been brought on of late years, but was the growth of time, and the Government had much to answer for, because they had inflicted upon that country an injury the consequences of which they were now feeling, and for which they might have to make retribution hereafter. But while the attention of Government appeared to be wholly engrossed by the present aspect of affairs in Ireland, he hoped it would consider the situation of the labouring classes in England. Every labouring man in England was now suffering more or less privation, in consequence of the calamity which had fallen upon Ireland. The prices of provisions were so high that labouring men, whose wages varied from 7*s*. to 11*s*. per week, could not by any possibility procure better fare than oatmeal. The idea of procuring other sustenance was quite out of the question. He hoped, therefore, that the condition of Scotland and parts of England would receive attention, and that the Government would not confine their measures entirely to the relief of Ireland. With respect to that country he would not add another word; but he confessed that there were some other subjects which he felt disappointed had not been noticed in the Speech from the Throne. The noble Lord at the head of the Government had upon more than one occasion remarked that one of the great questions for the consideration of the Government would be the introduction of a system of education into this country which would have for its object the improvement, not only of the social and religious, but also of the physical condition of the people. No mention had been made in the Speech of any intention to introduce such measures; but if the Government had overlooked or neglected them, he hoped they were but postponed until some future day, when measures of the kind he had alluded to would be brought forward for the consideration of Parliament. Unless some measures were introduced directed towards the amelioration of the condition of the working classes, they would be so steeped in degradation and overwhelmed with ignorance as to be unable to bear any sudden vicissitude such as that which had unhappily fallen upon the sister country. There was also another subject upon which he would venture to express a hope, and it was that his noble Friend the First Lord of the Treasury would not forego any of his intentions or stop short with respect to free-trade measures. The experience of the past had shown them that every restriction removed from commerce, had tended to lessen the price of food, to give employment to the people, and to increase the wealth and power of the country. He was therefore anxious to see the whole system carried out in all its integrity. It could not be expected that when great reductions were made in corn and other agricultural produce, that those connected with the cultivation of the land would permit protection to be removed from their commodities while it was preserved in favour of others. Therefore, to be consistent, he hoped the noble Lord would not leave undone any of the work which his predecessors had commenced. In his opinion, there were no limits to the restrictions which ought to be abolished; and holding such sentiments he admitted he felt some disappointment at not finding any allusion to the subject in the Royal Speech from the Throne, nor any reference made to it by either of the honourable Gentlemen who moved or seconded the Address. He was unaware of the measures which Her Majesty's Government intended to adopt with reference to the general question of Ireland; but of this he was assured, that unless they made some important reformations in the law of tenure, that country never could be maintained in a healthy state. He hoped there was not any truth in the rumour that the Government intended to take into their own hands the cultivation of the waste lands in Ireland; for, if they did, he was convinced the same disastrous consequences would follow which had attended the administration of relief through public works. The Government might, however, concert measures to facilitate the conveyance of property in Ireland, in order that men who possessed property which they could neither sell nor use, might dispose of it if they thought fit. A noble Marquess had stated that he was the possessor of large properties, but he was so poor that he could not expend the money he could have desired upon improvements. Such an avowal was manly and candid. The question of entail, then, was one which ought to come under the consideration of Her Majesty's Government, as well as the best mode of simplifying the transfer of property, in order that those who had the means should have the power of giving employment to the people. Should they, because their ancestors were such fools as to pass these laws, not be wiser than to retain them? An Irish land agent had told him that if the transfer of property were made as easy in Ireland as it ought to be, every estate would, in ten years, be in the course of improvement, and would give employment to a large proportion of those unemployed persons who were now feeding on the taxes of England. He should only further refer to the paragraph in the Royal Speech in reference to the free State of Cracow. He had prepared an amendment, which he should have moved the previous night as a substitute for the milk-and-water answer inserted in the Address, had it not been for the manly speech of the noble Lord (Lord J. Russell), whose opinion of the conduct of the Northern Powers was expressed in a style which rather unnerved him. The noble Lord spoke out, but he would not say the same for the Secretary of State for the Foreign Department. Last year, when he expressed doubts of the honesty of Austria, Russia, and Prussia, he was told that the occupation was only to be temporary; that their allies were too virtuous to seize the territory. A noble Duke in another place rang the changes to the same tune. He would like to know what that noble Duke thought of the matter now. The Government would not do justice to the feeling of the people of England, in reference to this matter, if they did not deprecate that act of atrocity in the strongest possible language. He had heard of no man who contemplated that act with patience, with the exception of two Members of that House, of whom he was ashamed, who held last night that there had been no violation of the Treaty of Vienna. One hon. Gentleman got all round Europe—he got to Westphalia—indeed he didn't know where the devil he didn't get to in maintaining this monstrous and absurd proposition, with the exception of Cracow, the length of which he did not manage to get. He did not show how the treaty in question was not applicable, as he assumed it to be, to the case of Cracow. In his opinion, a greater violation of public honour and faith had never been perpetrated by any Power or Powers, than that to which he now referred. When he saw what sacrifices England had made at the peace, when, amongst other things, she gave up Java and other important acquisitions, and kept nothing but trash to herself, in order to give satisfaction to and please these very Powers, who were now setting all faith with her at defiance; he could scarcely find words sufficiently effective to express his indignation at the late proceedings. An instance of the mistaken generosity with which England had acted towards some of these Powers was furnished in the payments which she had made for so many years, and was still making, of part of the loan of four millions, received by the Emperor Paul from the Dutch, to make war upon herself; she agreeing to become guarantee for the payment of two millions of that loan, so long as the Emperor adhered to the alliance. It afforded him satisfaction to hear the act relating to Cracow designated in the Speech from the Throne as a manifest violation of existing treaties, and that a protest had been directed to be tendered to the delinquent Powers respecting it. But this was not enough. The occasion required, in his opinion, even stronger language than this, if it not justify more active measures. What did Nicholas care for their protests? What did these Powers care for protests? The three Powers in question were trampling upon public faith, and destroying the value and sanctity of treaties—considerations sufficiently grave to induce the people of England and that House to abrogate every treaty which bound them to the Continent. They had never been of any use but for mischief; and whenever the other contracting parties chose to break them, they had not the courage to carry them out. If we are to have treaties let us at least adopt the determination to carry them out, if others take the liberty of violating them. But this was not their course. It might not, in itself, be a matter of much importance that a small body of persons, such as were contained in the State of Cracow, should be absorbed into the population of Austria; but it was the principle of the thing against which he protested. What security was there now for the peace of Europe but violence? It appeared, at least, that treaties could effect but little for it. All our treaties were one-sided treaties. England was made to pay by them and for them, when possible; and when she was kicked and abused she did not resent it. We could not have been more contemptuously treated in this affair of Cracow, by the three violating Powers, than we might have been had we been the poorest and the weakest State in Europe; and their conduct was all the more aggravating, when it was considered that some of them owed much of their greatness and independence to England. The House of Commons should very strongly and pointedly express its sense of these indignities, if Her Majesty's Ministers did not. But from the way in which the noble Lord (Lord J. Russell) spoke out last night, he had now the fullest confidence that the Government would act with the proper spirit on the occasion. They were now paying, as hush money, to the Emperor of Russia, about 100,000*l.* annually. He hoped to be able, with the concurrence of the House, to suspend these payments, now that the treaties with us were not observed. He hoped the noble Lord would not let the matter rest with a simple declaration of the House in this way; but have it solemnly recorded in this House that England was not thus to be trifled with nor trampled upon.

Colonel SIBTHORP said, that he had no wish to oppose the bringing up of the Report before the House. He merely rose to guard himself from being supposed to assent to, or approve of, the various passages in the Speech from the Throne. He received it as a Speech emanating from the Ministers, not from the Crown itself. The hon. Member who had just sat down expressed his delight at the gradual removal of every tax and impost upon commerce. But it would have been satisfactory to the country if the Chancellor of the Exchequer had informed it of the benefit which it was deriving from these alterations, by laying before the House some information with regard to the finances of the country. As he had not done so—as they were in possession of no information on this subject—as not the slightest intimation had been afforded them of the prosperity of the country, they had a right to infer that the finances of the State were not in that flourishing condition in which they could wish to find them. As to the state of Ireland, he (Colonel Sibthorp) had blamed the late Government, and that which preceded it, for the state of Ireland. They were told, when the Emancipation Bill was carried, that Ireland was to be thenceforth prosperous; and what had come of these predictions? The Government now would be deserving of impeachment if they did not take every possible means for the restoration of Ireland. This was the time to interpose, if anything effectual was to be done. It was not the time to send the physician when the patient was dead. They were told that the difficulties which now pressed upon that country could not have been prevented. But calamities of this kind were too frequently attributable to the want of precautionary measures to provide against them. Both the late and present Governments were responsible for much that had occurred in Ireland. With proper foresight they might have prevented much of the existing distress; but they told them that the difficulty could not have been provided against. It was they that were unable to provide against the difficulty. If Pitt could now rise from his tomb, what would he think of such Ministers as they had at the present day? He would be ashamed to sit on the same benches with them, or to unite with them in any way. They were informed that there was to be a temporary suspension of the 4*s.* duty, a duty which he was free to confess was of no use for the agriculturists. As to the Montpensier marriage, the Government had not the courage to remonstrate against it as they should have done. They glossed over their timidity in reference to that matter by parading what they had done in reference to the extinction of Cracow. Such a course would certainly not tend to elevate England in the estimation of foreign Powers. As to measures for the general relief, judging from the conduct of the Government in former times, he had not the slightest hope that anything would be effected for the benefit of the people at large.

Mr. POULETT SCROPE wished to take that opportunity of setting himself right with respect to a point which was raised in a few words which he had addressed to the House last night, and in which he had been contradicted by the Secretary for Ireland. The question affected the powers of the relief committees to give food to destitute people out of the funds which were supplemented by Government. The right hon. Gentleman said that he was incorrect in what he had stated. He had not last night the necessary papers by him to refer to; but he had since referred to them, and he would now quote a passage from the first instructions issued to the relief committees from Dublin, which confirmed his previous impression that these committees had no power to afford relief in any other shape than that of payment of labour and the purchase of provisions, for sale again at cost price. The 23rd section was to the effect that the relief fund formed of the balance remaining, with subscriptions, contributions, and donations, should be applied to the following purposes—for providing supplies of Indian corn and meal for sale; secondly, to afford relief by employment of labour; and thirdly, for defraying the contingent expenses of the committee, including remunerating the secretaries and clerks. The date of these instructions was the 1st of October. It might be said that some subsequent instructions had been issued, giving them the power of making gratuitous allowances of food. He must say that he doubted that very much, for he had watched very carefully all the instructions which had been issued, and he had not seen any change in this respect. He had also read the correspondence which had taken place between the relief committees who had remonstrated against those instructions and the Commissariat Board, at the head of which was Sir R. Routh; and, so far as he could gather from that correspondence, Sir R. Routh decidedly objected to extend the powers of the committees. He had a further proof of the accuracy of this assertion in a document of a more recent date—he meant the resolution passed by the Reproductive Employment Committee, of date December 23, which urgently pressed upon Government the necessity of altering their instructions in this respect. That resolution was—

> "That relief committees be empowered to sell at reduced prices, or in extreme cases to give, gratuitously, soup or other food to such aged, sick, or helpless persons, as have no one to work for them, and who cannot be relieved in the workhouses; and that this modification of the present system should not disentitle relief committees to the grant they now obtain from Government resources."

It was quite clear that the Reproductive Committee could not have formally placed before the Government such a remonstrance as that, if it had not been the fact that the relief committees were prohibited from giving relief, in any shape, to the infirm poor, so as to save them from starvation, even when the workhouses were so full as not to be able to receive any more inhabitants. He was reluctant to bring forward any facts which would seem to impeach the conduct of Government. He had no wish to trouble them or to throw any blame upon them; but he did think that they were taking a heavy responsibility on themselves in failing to provide for the infirm poor, and it appeared to him that their measure had entirely failed to provide for that class upon whom the pressure was at present particularly great: so far as he saw, they had been left solely to seek relief in the workhouses, which were too crowded to receive any further inmates, and which had become the abodes of pestilence, disease, and death. He wished to call the attention of the Government to the recommendation which was contained in the resolution of the Reproductive Committee, which followed the one he had previously read to the House. It was this:—

> "That the Treasury should be authorized to make advances by way of loan to boards of guardians, on the security of the future rates, for the purpose of affording increased temporary workhouse accommodation for the destitute poor."

By the Poor Law Act of 1837, boards of guardians were authorized, when there was a pressure upon their ordinary resources, to take other houses in the neighbourhood, and to call them workhouses, and to give the necessary relief in them. Now, he wondered why this had not been done in the present distress—why this had not been enforced on the boards of guardians. It was a question for grave consideration, and which the House would be called upon ere long to take up, when this subject should be further discussed, whether the boards of guardians were not liable to punishment for having neglected that part of their duty. Mr. Atkinson, a coroner in the county of Mayo, writing lately to the Lord Lieutenant, stated that he had held ten or twelve inquests, and that in every case a verdict of "death by starvation" had been recorded. When remonstrances such as those of Mr. Atkinson, and of other parties well acquainted with the prevailing state of destitution, were sent to the Government, how was it that the very simple means had not been adopted of extending workhouse accommodation, and opening a refuge for those who could not otherwise be provided for? He also wished to call the attention of the House to the pestilential state of many of the workhouses at present, owing to the manner in which they were crowded; and he would quote an extract from a report by Sir Philip Crampton and Dr. Corrigan, dated the 4th of January, showing that this was the case. He could not understand upon what principle the relief of the poor was confined to the workhouses, which were so full of pestilence that almost every poor man who entered was sure to fall a victim to fever. He appealed to any one who heard him to say whether, if he were placed in the position of seeing his wife and family starving along with himself; and if his only resource were to go with them into such a workhouse as that which he had described, or die out of it, he would not prefer the latter alternative? He was unwilling to detain the House; but he must say, that he thought the subject a serious one, and he confessed he did not understand the present impatience. It was a subject which had been uppermost in his mind for many months, and particularly during the last twenty-four hours; and when he heard the bells pealing yesterday for joy at the idea of the meeting of Parliament, he could not forget that there were thousands dying of hunger on the other side of the Channel; and that it was their first duty to attend to the wants of the people of that country, and endeavour to relieve them as far as possible. He could not understand why Government should not make a vigorous interference, even before Monday next, to put a stop to the horrors of starvation. [The CHANCELLOR of the EXCHEQUER: They are doing so.] He should be happy to find it so. With respect to the means of obtaining food for the people, he begged to say that he did not agree with those Gentlemen who thought that Government were in fault in not having ransacked Europe and America for food. He thought they were right in leaving the demand to be supplied by the natural course of trade; but he thought that they had erred in not at once having placed the responsibility of providing for the destitution upon the proper parties in Ireland, and thus secured an ample supply when prices were low. He believed that there was sufficient food within Ireland itself to meet the calamity; that, at least, there was not such a scarcity of food as, if brought into use, would leave any portion of the population to starve. He held a letter in his hand from a person in Ireland, stating that there was enough of cereal food in the country to meet the wants of the people; but that the farmers were waiting for high prices before they thrashed it out, and the writer asked why the screw should not be placed upon such fellows? [An hon. MEMBER: What district does that refer to?] The county of Galway. Well, the screw which he (Mr. Scrope) would apply, would be to make the owners of corn maintain their poor; and if this were done, they would soon thrash out their corn and feed the people.

The CHANCELLOR OF THE EXCHEQUER assured the hon. Member that his speech needed no apology, the importance of the subject to which it referred being a sufficient justification. He did not wish to anticipate the measures which the noble Lord the First Minister of the Crown had promised to lay before the House on an early day; but with respect to the point to which the hon. Member had particularly referred, as to the power of the relief committees to provide food for the aged and infirm, he begged to say that by a recent instruction those committees had been authorized to distribute gratuitous food to the people of various kinds. The Government did at first rely on the voluntary efforts of the Irish proprietors to provide for the aged and infirm; but, as soon as they found that no dependence could be placed upon that resource, they empowered the workhouse authorities to distribute food gratuitously. In the first instance, it was arranged that the rations should not proceed beyond a certain amount; but subsequently, permission was granted to give rations to any amount, provided there was a local fund in the district. He had last night a paper in his pocket which would have shown that the commissioners had pressed upon the attention of the workhouse authorities of Skibbereen the propriety of making a gratuitous distribution of food.

VISCOUNT BERNARD hoped the House would excuse him for intruding upon its attention for a short period, when it considered the position he, as an Irish Member, would be placed in, were he to remain silent whilst the subject of Irish distress was brought forward by an English Member. The hon. Member for Stroud had no reason to be satisfied with the explanation offered by the right hon. the Chancellor of the Exchequer; for he believed it would appear that the supplementary instructions to which the right hon. Gentleman had alluded were issued no longer ago than last week. The relief committee with which he had acted during the last six months, and which he had attended more than once every week, had never accepted one shilling of Government aid, because they were precluded from doing so by the instructions issued by the Government. The best mode of meeting the difficulty would have been to suspend the poor law for a time. By doing that, and granting out-door relief, the difficulty would have been better met than by any measure; and, therefore, he need not say far better than by the Labour Act, which had completely failed. It had been correctly stated by the hon. Member for Stroud, that no relief had been provided for the destitute, aged, and infirm. It was rather hard that Gentlemen connected with Ireland, should be taunted as they were upon the subject of a poor law for that country. He had not a seat in Parliament when the existing Irish poor law was passed, but the very Ministers were now in office who introduced that measure;

and when the right hon. Secretary for Ireland talked of the destitution of Ireland, as set forth in the Poor Law Commissioners' Report, it was necessary to remind him that it was the present Government and the party with which he was connected, who stinted relief to the poor in Ireland to the limits now complained of. It should be borne in mind that at the time the existing poor law was enacted, other measures were promised, which, if they had been adopted, would have taken up a large part of the surplus population of the country. The measures to which he referred were increased facilities for emigration, and for employing labourers on public works. If the Members of the present Government introduced the Irish Poor Law in its present shape because they thought the country was unable to support the burden of maintaining its poor, the responsibility rested upon them. He would not object to the extension of the law; on the contrary, he desired to see the laws of the two countries assimilated. Still, it would have been useless to advance such a proposition during the last few years, when the workhouses had not been half filled. If he or any other person had proposed to establish a system of out-door relief under such circumstances, they would have been accused of a desire to upset the law altogether. At present, however, the workhouses were in an awful state. At Skibbereen workhouse the deaths had exceeded those of last year at the same date by more than 200. It was said, that gentlemen residing in Ireland failed in performing their duty at this momentous crisis; but sufficient allowance was not made for the difficulties which they had to contend with. He had received a letter from the chairman of the Skibbereen board, which stated that two members of the board were at the present time suffering from typhus fever, which they had caught whilst in the performance of their duty as members of the board. Of the workhouse of which he (Viscount Bernard) was chairman, the master and his daughter, the clerk of the board of guardians, the schoolmaster and the schoolmistress, were all suffering from the same disease; contracted in the discharge of their duties. In the western part of the county with which he was connected, the state of the poor was really alarming. He gave the Government credit for the best intentions; but he believed that they committed a fatal error when they decided on doing away with the depôts which they found existing in Ireland. As soon as that step was taken, prices rose. They were told that it was impossible for the Government to undertake supplying the people with food. They were not asked to do that: all he desired was that they should establish depôts in the country to prevent forestalling, which was going on to an incredible extent. The hon. Member for Stroud had stated, on the authority of a letter which he had received, that there was a large quantity of corn in Ireland. He wished that he could confirm the hon. Member's statement. It was true, the farmers had corn for their own consumption; but the corn brought into the market of Cork, which was the second commercial city in Ireland, did not exceed the general average supply for July. Again, he begged to assure the House and the Government that the country was in a frightful condition. Whilst they were talking, hundreds were passing to eternity. Succour must be given to the people. Establish poor laws—charge their support on property—charge it upon anything: but he implored them to give food to the starving people. It was gratifying to know that an alteration was about to be made in the Labour Act, which had caused the expenditure of so much money uselessly, and he hoped that the Government would endeavour to induce the people to return to their ordinary occupations, and to cultivate the soil and improve agriculture; and he believed that if they did so, they would be repaid by the blessing of a fruitful harvest next year.

Sir G. GREY said, that the description given by the noble Lord of the evils afflicting Ireland was, unfortunately, but too true. It was famine under which the people of Ireland were suffering, and the united exertions of the Legislature and the Government could do no more than mitigate the effects of the calamity. It was beyond human power to create abundance in the place of scarcity, or entirely arrest the progress of disease and death, the consequences of destitution. It was, he admitted, the duty of the Government, as it was the duty and inclination of every Member of that House, to use all the means within their reach for staying the progress of disease and death, and for improving the condition of the Irish people. He believed that when the papers connected with this subject were in the hands of Members, as they would be in a few days, they would be of opinion that all the means which Government could make use of had been applied to that end. His right hon. Friend the Chancellor of the Exchequer had already informed the House that instructions had been issued for the establishment of soup-kitchens and gratuitous relief in districts where distress was severely felt. The object of this regulation was to bring relief home to that class of destitute persons who, by reason of age or infirmity, were unable to obtain any support from labour. He was desirous, without entering into details, of saying a few words with reference to what had fallen from the hon. Member for Stroud, respecting the refusal of the Government to advance money upon the arrears of rates due in poor-law unions. The papers which would soon be laid upon the Table would show the reasons which induced the Government not to acquiesce in the demand made upon them to advance money to poor-law unions on the security of rates. The fact was, that there was a general disposition, not unnaturally, on the part of boards of guardians in Ireland, to shrink from the onerous duty imposed on them by the present circumstances of the country, of collecting outstanding rates; and the Government felt, that if they were to advance money on the security of future rates, the collection of rates throughout Ireland would absolutely cease, and the entire support of the poor would be transferred from those who were bound to maintain them to the public treasury. Against that result they had endeavoured to guard, and they were fortified in the decision to which they had come by knowing that many parties who had the means of paying the rates sought to shelter themselves under the plea of inability, and to evade the discharge of the obligation imposed upon them. The Government had the gratification of perceiving that beneficial results had followed from some firmness in that respect. But it had been said, why not increase the amount of workhouse accommodation? That point had been pressed upon the attention of the Poor Law Commissioners, and the deficiency of workhouse accommodation had in several cases been supplied. The hon. Member for Stroud complained that additional workhouse accommodation had not been provided, out of the public funds, for the Castlebar union; and said, that persons who were desirous of becoming inmates of the workhouse there had been turned from the door; and that, in consequence, numerous inquests had been held on persons who had died of want. He had, to-day, seen a statement which showed that there was accommodation for 600 persons in Castlebar workhouse; but the board of guardians had grossly neglected their duty, and shut the door against all applicants, although the building contained only 130 inmates. The board of guardians persisted in this course of conduct, and, in spite of the remonstrances of the assistant poor-law commissioner, and afterwards of the Poor Law Commissioners themselves, refused to make any further provision for their suffering fellow-creatures. The Poor Law Commissioners had in consequence announced their intention of exercising the power with which they were invested under the Act of Parliament, by dissolving the board of guardians, with a view to the establishment in their place of a paid board. He did not wish to anticipate discussion, and would, therefore, take leave of this part of the subject by expressing his belief that when the hon. Member for Stroud perused the papers, he would modify the opinion he had expressed as to the dereliction of duty on the part of the Government. Having had occasion to address the House upon this subject, he should be doing violence to his feelings were he to resume his seat without saying a few words respecting Scotland. Recent events had brought him into immediate communication with the proprietors of the Western Highlands. It was right that the House should be aware that the distress which prevailed in the Western Highlands was most severe; but the exertions made by the landlords to meet the exigency—the sacrifices they made—the obligations they incurred for that purpose—were such as entitled them to the greatest praise. They had in many instances charged their estates to a large amount, in order to provide employment for the people. In consequence of these exertions, and the precautions which had been taken, he knew of only two deaths having occurred. Those deaths were stated to have occurred on the estate of a proprietor whose conduct was, in the first instance, an exception to the general conduct of the proprietors, although, on the subject being pressed upon his attention, he subsequently took the same steps as had been generally taken by others. He hoped by the continued exertions of the landlords, and by the aid afforded by that most valuable Act, the Drainage Act—passed not with reference to the existing distress, but which was now brought most beneficially into operation, increasing almost indefinitely the productiveness of that district of Scotland, spreading extensive employment for the people—he hoped that by such means Scotland would struggle successfully through the present crisis. He thought it right to say these few words as to Scotland, as from the much more severe distress in Ireland the latter had naturally occupied most of their attention.

Mr. CALLAGHAN: He had heard with sincere gratification that the Government was about to aid the relief committees in affording something like support to the aged and infirm poor, who could not be received in the workhouses. He heard it with pleasure; for this was one of the great defects which everybody urged against the Government measures, and he hoped the announcement of their determination to give more extended relief would now go forth through the provincial press of Ireland. He had left Ireland only yesterday, and he could say that up to that time nothing had been known of this intention of the Government, so that there must have been some unaccountable delay in giving those orders. The other point he wished to advert to was, the subject of depôts. He thought, that, in the first instance, the supply of food should have been left to the traders, and that it would have been very improper for Government to come into competition with traders in the purchase of food abroad, or with its sale when imported. But it was clear that traders could not give the supply which was lately wanted, and that no ordinary rules should stand in the way when the destitution of the people was extreme. He recollected saying some time back to the Commissary General, who told him he was about to establish depôts in the more central parts of Ireland, "Do you imagine that when the people are starving, they will not break open the doors of your depôts?" He replied, "I don't expect they will be quiet." Now, what was the fact? That depôts were established along the line of coast from Donegal to Cork, and though the people were starving, food was not given out at any price whatever. In Skibbereen and in Dunmanway, though the people had been suffering as they heard, yet the Government stores were full of food, which could not be obtained at any price. He saw himself persons from Killarney purchasing food in Cork, which, if supplied nearer to their home, would save them from the greatest inconvenience. He quite concurred with his noble Friend (Viscount Bernard) as to the extreme distress which existed in that part of the country to which he had referred. He could confirm, too, his noble Friend's statement that the farmers were living very much on the supplies which they had themselves raised. Though himself a landlord, he could not blame them for that. But he must say, that so far from the landlords being fair objects for abuse, they were very much to be pitied; and he was sure that was the general feeling that prevailed in Ireland with respect to them. He must impress on the Government the necessity of taking immediate steps for the mitigation of the distress, which was increasing daily, and to an extent which would scarcely be credited. In the Cork union, where accommodation was provided for but 2,000 paupers, there were 5,600, the highest number that had ever applied for relief. The guardians did all they could in providing additional places for the reception of this increase to the number of paupers; but it was impossible to guard altogether against the evils arising from such a state of things. Any measures in contemplation by Government should, therefore, be promptly applied.

Mr. G. A. HAMILTON said, it was not his intention to take that opportunity of addressing the House. Another occasion would soon arrive when measures relating to Ireland would be before the House, and he thought it was not desirable that a debate on the Queen's Speech should be prolonged beyond what was necessary; but he should not be doing justice to Her Majesty's Ministers, or to his own feelings, if he was to allow the debate to close without thanking them for the declarations just made by the Secretary for the Home Department, that soup kitchens were to be formed, and soup distributed to the poor in those districts where the people were in a state of starvation. He believed no mode for relieving them could be devised which was more efficacious. It had been found so in many cases with which he was himself acquainted. He only regretted that Her Majesty's Ministers had not made that announcement in Her Majesty's Speech; it would have been received with gratification and gratitude from one end of Ireland to the other; and would have prevented many of the strong expressions which hon. Members, who felt strongly on the subject, had used during the debate. It had been stated by one hon. Member this evening, that there was a disinclination among the poor-law guardians to make the poor-law system available in the present great emergency, by giving temporary out-door relief. He (Mr. Hamilton) did not believe that this was the case; on the contrary, he believed that the general feeling in boards of guardians was, that starvation must be prevented at whatever cost. He was himself opposed generally to out-door relief, and yet from a deep consciousness of the responsibility which devolved upon every one to prevent, as far as possible, such horrible occurrences as those they had heard of at Skibbereen, he had summoned the board of the union, in the county of Dublin, of which he was chairman, specially, and had himself proposed, and the proposition was unanimously adopted, to open district rooms or houses in the parts of the union where the greatest distress prevailed, and to give one meal per day to properly selected destitute persons, resident within the union, so that they might, at least, be kept from starvation. He was sorry to say, the proposition had not been favourably received by the commissioners. He must add, that considering the situation in which those commissioners were placed—considering that on them, in a great degree, was imposed the responsibility of looking to the poor of Ireland—the feeling in Ireland was—he would not say that the commissioners did not feel that responsibility—but certainly that they did not act with the energy which so extraordinary an emergency required. He would now suggest to Her Majesty's Government the expediency of some such temporary measure as that which he had mentioned. He would not trouble the House further, having risen merely to thank Government for their determination to relieve the starving people, by the establishment of soup kitchens in the distressed districts.

Mr. SHARMAN CRAWFORD said, the question of the Irish poor law had been raised in the present discussion; he thought, if ever there was an oppressive, unjust, and unchristian enactment, it was the Irish poor law. Its principle was, that no matter what might be the necessity, not a farthing in relief should be given out of doors. That principle had been acted on, and he would quote a few of the results it had produced. The memorial from the board of guardians of Skibbereen to the Lord Lieutenant stated that the House was calculated to hold 800; that the number of inmates was then 1,169; of these 332 were ill of fever and other diseases; the attendants were quitting, the apothecary had resigned, the guardians had discontinued to meet in the board-room, the funds were exhausted, the arrears could not be collected; and, under these circumstances, the board was compelled to close the door against further applications. That was one instance of the working of the Irish poor law; pestilence was actually created within the walls of the house, and yet no relief was allowed to be given out of it. The Surgeon General, in his report of the state of the South Dublin union, stated that the number of inmates was 1,946; of these 805 were ill with fever and dysentery, caused by overcrowded wards and insufficient ventilation. Was it not absolutely cruel to force the poor to come into that infected house under the compulsion of starvation? Was not such a law cruel and unchristian? These cases were from the southern parts of Ireland; but he would take an instance from the best part of Ireland, the neighbourhood of Belfast. The union-house of Newtownards had 800 inmates; the female children were lying seven in two beds; the adult women were sleeping three in two narrow beds placed together; sickness prevailed to a great extent, from the crowded state of the house; the board had asked leave to give the poor one meal a day out of the house, but no assent was given to it. In the workhouse of Downpatrick the small-pox had broken out, yet the poor must be relieved in it. Was it not inhuman to send them to such an infectious place? He called on the Government to give a discretionary power to guardians to give out-door relief. On the part of the board of Newtownards, he could say they wanted no assistance from the Government; if they had the power of giving out-door relief, they could supply the poor themselves; the property of the locality could support the poor if they were not restricted in the power of doing so. The Labour Act had been spoken of; the Government had been blamed for passing it, but he did not think it fair in the Irish Members to blame the Government for that Act. Why did they not attend Parliament when it was passed? He recollected at the close of last Session there was no attendance of Irish Members; if the Government did pass an injudicious Act, it was not for them to blame the Government, who framed it with the best intentions. There was, however, one peculiar fault: the Government would not give more than the rate of wages in the locality; and where the usual rate was very low, the work, as relief, was worthless. There had been instances in Cork of men receiving 8*d.* or 9*d.* a day Government wages, dying of starvation. Another evil attending the measure was, that it withdrew labour from agriculture. These evils naturally resulted from such a state of things; at the same time it was useless to give the people employment unless at wages sufficient to support themselves. The right hon. Gentleman (Mr. Labouchere) placed great reliance on public subscriptions; but if he did so he would be entirely disappointed. The relief of the people, in a state of starvation, must not depend on the contingency of voluntary subscription; it would be greatest where the distress was least, and relief must be given whether there was a subscription or not. Instead of trust in voluntary contributions, let the property of the country be made by law responsible for the support of the poor; let all the property of the country be equally and justly taxed for that purpose. It would be the best protection that could be given to landed property, and the best relief to the people. As an Irish landlord, he must say, there was a responsibility weighing upon them from which they could not easily free themselves. The present generation might say, the condition of the people was no fault of theirs; but it was the fault of their predecessors, and those who inherited their property must be answerable for their acts. He did not desire to shake off that responsibility. The right hon. Gentleman had appealed to the Irish landlords; he (Mr. S. Crawford) was ready to join him in passing a law that would make the property of Ireland responsible for feeding and employing the people. But he would not join him in expecting to obtain the relief of the people from voluntary contributions; they only acted oppressively and unjustly; the liberal man was oppressed, and he who was not disposed to be generous, escaped. Whether, therefore, in the shape of a Poor Law or a Labour Act, he called for this, that the property of Ireland should be fairly assessed for the relief of the poor. Until the Irish landlords came forward and made that proposal, they were not in a position to call on England for relief. In the present circumstances, there was a fair claim for assistance from the national funds; but why were they compelled to seek it? Why was the food of Ireland exported to such an extent? Because the people could not get a fair day's wages for a fair day's work. But make it the interest of the land to employ the people, and they would receive a rate of wages sufficient to supply them with food. It was said there was a difficulty in collecting a poor rate; but much of it arose from the law itself. One part of the rate was paid by the landlord; but by the assessment the tenant must pay the whole in the first instance, and then recover the landlord's portion from him afterwards. Let this be altered, and each be made to pay their own share. He must call the attention of Government to the necessity of providing seed for the crops of next season, for he did not think the people could procure it themselves; and if the land was uncultivated it would produce an aggravation of all the distress next year. But, whatever other measures they might adopt, he pressed on the Government the necessity of making a poor law for Ireland, that should make the property of the country responsible for the support of the population.

MR. FRENCH would defer those observations which he desired to offer upon the remedies, tried or about to be tried, for distress in Ireland, until the question came before them on a future evening; and he now only rose to say a few words in reply to the statement of the right hon. Baronet the Secretary for the Home Department, touching the circumstances of the Castlebar union. He was of opinion, considering the little and very inaccurate information which they yet possessed of the actual position of affairs in that union, and considering the course the right hon. Baronet had given notice he intended to pursue, that it was most injudicious to bring the matter, in such a form, before the House. He believed that the course about to be pursued would be altogether unjust and uncalled for. The guardians of the Castlebar union were not to blame for what had happened. They had found it utterly impossible to collect the rates within that union, and, seeing that to be the case, with very laudable humanity, several members of the board of guardians had taken upon themselves the responsibilty of supplying the urgent necessities of those looking to them for support and assistance. He further considered that the measure notified by the right hon. Baronet would be illegal, as certainly it would be unjust. The commissioners had power to appoint paid poor-law guardians only in those cases in which the guardians declined to act; and in the instance of the Castlebar board no such justification had been afforded by their conduct. The guardians, not succeeding in collecting the rates, because of the extreme poverty of the country, had themselves come forward, and Lord Lucan had paid out of his own pocket a portion of the necessary funds. [Mr. P. SCROPE: Were Lord Lucan's rents paid?] He could not answer as to that individual landlord; but he could assure the hon. Member that, in several districts in Ireland, and especially, as he knew in Connaught, the candle was burning at both ends. The landlords could not get in their rents, and had yet to support the starving population on their different estates.

MR. LEFROY expressed his great satisfaction at the candid manner in which Her Majesty's Government admitted the great distress that now prevailed in Ireland, and at learning their readiness to mitigate existing evils. He also bore testimony to the great anxiety manifested by the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, as well as by the Secretary for Ireland, to promote the interests of that country, as well as the cordial manner they entered on the consideration of every scheme which was submitted to their attention that was deemed calculated to alleviate the sufferings of the people. It had been said, why not increase your buildings in order to afford accommodation to a larger number of your poor? But those who said so must not be aware of the great difficulty there was in the collection of poor rates—not but in some instances temporary erections had taken place. He knew a nobleman who had been attacked in that House, whose last May's rent had fallen short 5,000*l.*, and yet that nobleman was at the present time supplying soup and coffee to upwards of three thousand persons. He knew landlords who were making every sacrifice, even to a reduction in their establishments, to afford relief to the poor. The system which was at present carried on with regard to the employment of the people, was bringing ruin upon the landlords and the country at large. The money which was at present expended in unprofitable works, ought to be employed in the drainage of the soil, in seed sowing, and all such works as would be reproductive. He regretted the language used on the previous evening by the hon. Member for Bath (Mr. Roebuck), with respect to the Irish landlords. He would advise Members, before they came down to that House to give currency to the calumnious reports which were being continually published against the Irish landlords, first to inquire into their truth. He did not mean to say that those hon. Members who had spoken harshly of the Irish landlords, did so with an unfair intention, but they certainly spoke with an entire ignorance of that body. Charges had often been brought in that House against the Irish landlords, but they had been repeatedly shown to be without foundation. Hon. Members spoke as if the preservation of Ireland was only to be effected by a confiscation of the property of the Irish landlords. It was unfair to create in that House at the present time a feeling of disaffection between the people of England and Ireland. It had been said that the Irish landlords had not performed their duty to their tenants and the poor of their neighbourhoods; but they were proving, by their spirited endeavours throughout the whole of Ireland, that the charge was a most unjust one. He had had the pleasure of attending a meeting of Irish landlords in Dublin last week, and the feeling that universally prevailed amongst those there assembled from all parts of Ireland, was an earnest desire to relieve the people during their present awful condition, and also to provide as far as possible for their future welfare. The utmost unanimity prevailed at that meeting. There was no attempt to overawe Her Majesty's Government: their desire was, amongst other things, to acknowledge with gratitude the benevolence of the English public towards the Irish people; and he could only say that if, instead of pursuing the course suggested by the hon. Member for Bath, Her Majesty's Government would co-operate with the Irish landlords in their endeavours to ameliorate the condition of Ireland, the result would be a real improvement, and the grateful acknowledgment of the people of that country.

MR. BORTHWICK would not attempt to deny the existence of wide-spread misery in Ireland; but he must also beg the Government and the House to bear in mind the great distress with which his own country (Scotland) was afflicted at the present time. After so long a discussion, however, of Irish distress, he would not attempt to inflict a speech on Scotch distress upon the House. But he would attempt to make a few observations on those other topics in the Speech from the Throne. He might be permitted to congratulate the House, that after the fragmentary state to which its various sections and parties were reduced by the conduct of the right hon. Baronet last Session, they found such an absence of all bad feeling, and he was especially gratified to see "the happy family" that assembled last night on the opposite bench in support of the measures which Her Majesty's Government had vaguely defined in the Speech under consideration. Like the preceding speaker, he had to tender to Her Majesty's Government his most firm promise of a careful consideration on his part of every measure which they might submit to the House, and that after such consideration he would record his vote. In taking that course he only followed the example of all that had spoken upon the topics contained in the Speech from the Throne. He would not attempt to enter into an elaborate discussion such as was entered into last night upon treaties in general, and the Treaty of Cracow in particular, because he was not sufficiently learned in those matters. He would, however, say, that it seemed to him that the case of Cracow was simply an inversion of the old and manifest axiom, that the greater included the less, and the assertion that the less included the greater. In his opinion, the treaty in question had been manifestly violated. But there was another point, which was, he feared, of far greater importance to this country than the affairs of Cracow. He thought that those who professed to be the friends of the King of the French, and who told us that it was to him, and to him alone, through Divine Providence, that we were indebted for the protection of European peace, and the guardianship of the European nations, had proved themselves to be the worst friends to that monarch and to France that it was possible to imagine. He admitted the great importance of the *entente cordiale* between France and this country; but he did contend that, notwithstanding that document, the security of all the interests of the rest of Europe had been deranged by the recent step of the French with regard to the marriage of the Infanta of Spain. It was right that the French should imagine, as their organs would lead us to imagine, that all parties in this country most entirely concurred in sympathizing with the protest which the Government of this country had made against the marriage of the Infanta Luisa of Spain with the Duke of Montpensier. It was said by the intense lovers of peace who had spoken in this matter, that it was not necessary to present a protest against the marriage; but, in his opinion, it was most essential that it should be well known in France, by the King of the French, and by his people, that all parties in this country protested against the Montpensier marriage, and that they deeply sympathized with the protest which the English Government had presented against it. The *entente cordiale* was useful only in proportion as it existed between the people of the two countries; it was between the great and noble people of France and the people of England that the good understanding was desirable. It was not desirable that there should be an *entente cordiale* between two Courts for the support of a dynasty on the one side, or a party on the other. He would ask whether M. Guizot, in his despatch of February 27, 1846, had stated that the Conde de Montemolin and his brother had excluded themselves, by their own conduct, from making successful offers for the hand of Isabella? M. Guizot had said that France had done all in her power to effect a marriage between Isabella and one of the sons of Don Carlos; but the fact was, that at that moment no attempt whatever had been made on the part of the French Government to ascertain what were the feelings or what were the purposes of any of the junior branches of the Don Carlos party or of the Conde de Montemolin. He (Mr. Borthwick) wished to know whether the noble Lord the Secretary for Foreign Affairs was prepared to obtain from France the details of the communications which took place between the Conde de Montemolin and M. Guizot on this subject; and he wished to know whether he was prepared to give any answer which the Conde de Montemolin returned? He (Mr. Borthwick) was curious to know this, and it was most desirable that the House should be put in possession of that information, if the noble Lord had it at his command. He did not know whether the French Government had communicated with the noble Lord on this subject, but it was most desirable that the House, if possible, should obtain copies of all communications that might have passed between the two Governments; and if the noble Lord was not then in a position to lay the documents before the House, he, in his place in that House, would ask the noble Lord to obtain from the French Government the facts as to what were the propositions which had been made on the 4th of

June to the Conde de Montemolin, and also what was the answer which the Conde de Montemolin made to those propositions: and also what were the additional verbal propositions that were made to the Conde. For his own part he did not wish to say anything upon that subject, because the time would come when the noble Lord would lay the papers on the Table of the House, and the question be fully considered. He thought that it was most essential that these debates should not conclude without a distinct avowal that the feelings of the people of this country were in unison with those of the British Government in reference to the Spanish marriages.

Mr. PLUMPTRE regarded the accounts every day received from Ireland as so afflicting, that he was very much disposed to agree with the hon. Member for Stroud (Mr. P. Scrope) in the expression which had fallen from him, to the effect that the ringing of bells in a time of such woe was quite repugnant to his feelings, and that all sounds which might be taken as indications of mirth or joy should cease. The calamity which had come upon Ireland was a visitation of a most solemn and startling nature, which must deeply affect us as Christians, and men professing to be guided by the Word of God as revealed. It was not for him to search into the decree which had sent forth this tremendous visitation; but he had a strong and deep conviction that our rulers had deeply offended by some Acts which had been placed upon the Statute-book. With awe and sincerity he would submit to the noble Lord at the head of the Government, who, he was sure, was alive to the very serious evils which afflicted that country, whether even now it might not be proper that some general humiliation should take place. He was aware that a day of humiliation had been appointed in the sister country, and a form of prayer also used in our own land, containing some expressions of a very strong nature. Without presuming for a moment to put forward any opinion of his own, he would submit to Ministers whether this calamity was not of so general and pressing a nature as to call for a special act of national humiliation. He believed it had not yet reached its height, though it was sweeping away hundreds and thousands of persons to death, as the noble Lord the Member for Bandon had told them that night. It was worthy consideration whether this state of things might not be alleviated by some further act of general humiliation before God, to implore the withdrawal of his displeasure from us. He hoped he had not, by what he had said, offended against the feelings of the House; but he could not help giving utterance to convictions which he deeply and sincerely entertained.

Mr. EWART said, there were but two points to which he wished, before the debate closed, to advert. The subject of education was not mentioned in the Speech from the Throne; but he was not without hopes that some measure might, at all events, be projected, and that this Session would not be allowed to pass away without the Government proposing a system which would at least develop that tendency towards the promotion of education which was latent in the minds of men, and only required to be elicited in order to produce the most beneficial consequences from its advancement. He hoped that before the Session closed, they would have some measures of a safe and salutary kind in favour of the general extension of education laid before the House. Another object he had in rising was to express his satisfaction at that part of Her Majesty's Speech which referred to our relations with France. As one who had supported every Minister of this country in succession who had advocated the maintenance of general peace, he was most anxious that all causes of exacerbation should be avoided; and he was most happy to find that allusion was made to the subject which had raised an unhappy discord between us and the neighbouring country, in a manner not calculated to add to any irritation that might unhappily exist. As an Englishman, he must express his most cordial sympathies with the sufferings of Ireland; and he assured Irish Members that as an English representative he should feel it his duty to entertain all questions relating to Ireland on a footing of exact equality with those relating to England and Scotland.

Lord G. BENTINCK said, that some observations had been made with respect to a noble Friend of his, Lord Lucan, who was, he believed, the largest proprietor in the parish of Castlebar. He had that noble Lord's authority for stating that, during the six years he had held his Irish estates, he had not only expended the entire of his Irish rents, but a great part of his English rents too, in the parish of Castlebar, where he resided. It had also been said, that the ratepayers of that parish had refused to pay the rates; but it was only justice to them to say, that if they had refused, it was because, at the baronial session, presentments were made which it was not in the power of the barony to pay. In the county of Mayo, the baronial presentments, he believed, amounted to no less a sum than 400,000*l.* Now these assessments, as he understood, were made at sessions where not the rate and cess payers only (who alone had the right to vote) attended, but in the presence of a hungry mob, with shillelaghs in their hands; and not passed by reason and argument, but actually shouted down; so that, in point of fact, the unfortunate landlords had no choice, but, in fear of their lives, were obliged to acquiesce. But if it were true that the ratepayers of Castlebar had declined to levy the rates, he believed it was no less true that Lord Lucan had, out of his own pocket, maintained all the poor who at that time were in the workhouse at Castlebar.

Mr. P. **SCROPE** wished to ask the noble Lord how it came to pass that so many persons were sent over from Ireland, particularly from the county Mayo, to England, which caused a great influx of Irish paupers, especially into Liverpool?

Lord G. **BENTINCK** said, he had only heard about Mayo in the course of conversation; but with respect to Liverpool, he had been in communication with some merchants there, and he had been informed that it was not the Irish landlords who had imported their paupers into Liverpool, but that the influx had its origin in a very extraordinary kind of speculation. It appeared that at this season of the year the steamers were short of their usual cargoes, and it suited the purpose of their owners to bring over the Irish paupers free to Liverpool, on the speculation that the parishes there would be obliged to send them back again.

Report agreed to, and, on the Motion of Lord John Russell, ordered to be presented by Members of the House who were of the Privy Council.

House adjourned at Nine o'clock.

HOUSE OF LORDS,

Thursday, January 21, 1847.

Minutes.] *Took the Oaths.*—The Earl of Desart.

HER MAJESTY'S ANSWER TO THE ADDRESS.

Earl **FORTESCUE** (the Lord Steward of the Household) rose and said: My Lords, the Address of this House has been presented, pursuant to your Lordships' order, to the Queen; and Her Majesty has been graciously pleased to return an Answer, which, with your Lordships' permission, I will read:—

> "My Lords,
>
> "I thank you for your Expressions of Loyalty and Attachment to My Crown and Person.
>
> "And you may rely with the most perfect Confidence on My anxious Desire to aid you in promoting, at all Times, the Prosperity and Happiness of My People."

On the Motion of the Marquess of Lansdowne, the Address and Answer to be printed and published.

THE UNITED STATES AND MEXICO.

Lord **BROUGHAM** inquired whether the Government had received any information as to a very extraordinary transaction which was said to have taken place between the United States and Mexico. It was stated that the United States had offered a large sum to Mexico to purchase the cession of California. It was not to be supposed that Mexico would be willing to close the bargain on credit, because she had no doubt some knowledge of the American doctrine of repudiation. He had himself received the information from a source on which he felt he could rely—from a Member of a great commercial firm in the city of London.

The Marquess of **LANSDOWNE** had understood that such an offer was made some time ago, but he was not aware that it had been accepted.

Lord **BROUGHAM** observed, that perhaps Mexico had refused, because America had not offered ready money.

THE DEBATE ON THE ADDRESS—EXPLANATION.

The Marquess of **WESTMEATH** was anxious to remove a misconstruction which he was informed had been placed upon something that fell from him during the debate of Tuesday last. It was supposed that he had expressed a wish that the money which had been expended under the Labour-rate Act up to the present time should be repaid most punctually. Now, he gave no such opinion. He had it not in his contemplation to give such an opinion. It depended upon Parliament and the country whether they would require that the money laid out under an Act of

Parliament passed in such circumstances as the Labour-rate Act, and under which the greater part of that money was admitted to have been thrown away and wasted, should be repaid. He thought that the late Government as well as the present were responsible for the effects of that legislation.

House adjourned.

HOUSE OF COMMONS,

Thursday, January 21, 1847.

Minutes.] Public Bills.—1° Corn Importation; Navigation.

Petitions Presented. From Northampton, for Repeal of the Duty on the Windows of Public Houses.—From Rochdale, and several other places, for Limiting the Hours of Labour in Factories.—From Ballymena, and other places, complaining of Deductions from the Pensions of Chelsea Pensioners.—From East India and China Association of Liverpool, and West India Planters of Liverpool, for Allowing the use of Sugar and Molasses by Brewers and Distillers.

CONTROVERTED ELECTIONS.

Mr. SPEAKER acquainted the House that his warrant for the appointment of Members to serve on the General Committee of Elections was upon the Table. Warrant read, as follows:—

"Pursuant to an Act passed in the 8th year of the reign of Her present Majesty, intituled 'An Act to amend the Law for the Trial of Controverted Elections of Members to serve in Parliament,' I do hereby appoint

"The right honourable Sidney Herbert, Member for the Southern Division of the County of Wilts;

"The right honourable Fox Maule, Member for the Town of Perth;

"Thomas Grimston Bucknall Escourt, esquire, Member for the University of Oxford;

"William Villiers Stuart, esquire, Member for the County of Waterford;

"Joseph Brotherton, esquire, Member for the Borough of Salford;

"And William Miles, esquire, Member for the Eastern Division of the County of Somerset;

"To be Members of the General Committee of Elections for the present Session.

"Given under my hand, this 21st day of January, 1847. Charles Shaw Lefevre, Speaker."

MEXICAN LETTERS OF MARQUE.

Mr. ROEBUCK wished to put two questions to the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, of which he had given the noble Lord notice. He should not be able to make the House understand those questions without a very short preface. It appeared that an agent of the Government of Mexico in this country had established an office from which, he stated, he was ready to issue to any persons who might wish to obtain them letters of marque, and also acts of naturalization — letters of marque against the United States, and acts of naturalization to protect any persons, not being native-born Mexicans, acting under those letters of marque, against the consequences of piracy. The first question he wished to ask was, whether or not any notice had been taken of the establishment of this office, and of the appearance of such an agent, in the country of a neutral and friendly nation, by the Minister or Government of the United States; and if this had been the case, what answer had been given by Her Majesty's Government, and what view they took of the circumstance? The subject to which his next question referred was of a more complicated nature, and would require some explanation. It had been said, that there was a determination on the part of the American Government to hang any persons having these acts of naturalization who were taken fighting against the United States under letters of marque, notwithstanding such acts of naturalization. This proceeding would, he conceived, be a gross violation even of their own (the American) notions of international law; and he wished to ask the noble Lord whether precautions had been taken to prevent such a disaster—for he could give it no other name—in the case of British subjects; and if so, what correspondence had taken place between the two Governments on the subject?

Viscount PALMERSTON: With regard to the first question which has been put by the hon. and learned Gentleman, the Government has no knowledge of the fact to which he has referred—that is to say, they have no knowledge that there is an agent in this country authorized, on the part of the Mexican Government, to issue letters of marque, or acts of naturalization. The only fact bearing on the subject with which I am acquainted is, that an advertisement was tendered to *The Times*, and refused by them, upon which a letter was afterwards inserted—I think on the 15th of January—from a Mr. Barnes, of Tower-hill, who, probably wishing to make an ingenious advertisement of his own wares, had wanted to make known through *The Times* that, at his shop on Tower-hill, a copy of the original decree of the Mexican Government, authorizing these letters of marque, might be obtained; but in the letter he wrote to *The Times*, he stated that he was not authorized to issue such letters of marque; and that he did not know that any other person in this country was so authorized. He probably wished to attract customers to his shop, hoping that when they looked at the decree they would purchase his guns and pistols. The only communication on the subject between the United States' Government and our own was a verbal communication between the American Minister, and myself. He had heard of something of this sort having taken place, and he expressed a hope that the British Government would not allow anything to take place in this country inconsistent with the neutrality we have maintained in the disputes between Mexico and the United States. I assured the United States' Minister, that, though I was not informed as to the circumstances to which he adverted, our position was one of strict and impartial neutrality, and that we were ready to do anything the law of the land enabled us to do to prevent any proceedings inconsistent with the maintenance of that neutrality. Though no case has yet arisen, I thought it right to refer the question to the law advisers of the Crown, in order to ascertain—supposing such letters of marque to be tendered—what steps the British Government would be authorized to take under the law, to prevent any hostile preparations in this country with a view to aggression upon the United States. With regard to the other question put by the hon. and learned Gentleman, it is, I believe, perfectly true that some time ago notice was issued by the Government of the United States that they would treat as pirates any foreigners found serving on board Mexican privateers: and I have considered it my duty to instruct the British representative at Washington to express to the United States' Government the expectation of Her Majesty's Government that this threat will not be carried into execution upon any British subject. Not only is there the objection mentioned by the hon. and learned Gentleman—that the Americans themselves admit the principle that the subjects of one country may, by a short process, be naturalized in another; but it was an universal practice, during the last war, to employ the subjects of other nations. The House is aware that, during the last war, we had serving in our navy sailors belonging to various foreign countries—Swedes, Danes, and others; and that they were always considered as entitled to the privileges attaching to British-born subjects. The United States also, I believe, in the course of their short war with us, employed foreign subjects in their service.

Subject at an end.

LAWS OF SCOTLAND.

Mr. HUME said, that towards the close of the last Session of Parliament he inquired whether the Lord Advocate was prepared to bring in any measures to carry out the recommendations of the Commissioners who had been appointed to inquire into the laws of Scotland; and he received a very satisfactory answer from the hon. and learned Gentleman, who stated that he would give the subject consideration during the recess. He now wished to ask the Lord Advocate whether he intended to introduce any and what measures relative to the laws of Scotland?

The LORD ADVOCATE said, the subject to which the hon. Gentleman referred, had received, and would continue to receive, his best attention; and he hoped to be able, at a very early period, to lay before the House various measures for the purpose of carrying into effect the recommendations of the Commissioners, particularly with regard to the law of real property.

CORN AND NAVIGATION LAWS.

Lord J. RUSSELL then moved the Order of the Day for going into Committee of the whole House on the Corn Importation Act.

House being in Committee,

Lord J. RUSSELL said: Mr. Greene, so favourable an inclination was shown by the House, on the first day of the Session, to adopt the proposal I shall have to submit to them to-day, that I shall not trouble the House with many details which I should otherwise have thought it necessary to lay before them. I will, however, state, as well as I am able, what has been hitherto, and what is now, the general prospect of the supplies of this country, and the reasons why I shall propose to this House to suspend for a time the duties upon foreign corn. I will, in the same statement, give my reasons for proposing the suspension of the navigation laws, the two subjects being closely connected together; and immediately after the Speaker has resumed the chair, I will propose that the House shall go into committee on the navigation laws. I will state, therefore, generally, that upon the termination of the harvest, the prospects and statements led to the conclusion that the harvest of wheat would be somewhat below an average, but that the crop was of very fine and superior quality; and that the produce of barley and of oats was in many parts of the kingdom deficient, particularly with regard to oats, in which, in some districts, there was a considerable deficiency. But the greatest loss which occurred, was the failure of the potato crop—a failure which was considerable in England, which was far more considerable in some parts of Scotland, and which was to the extent, it is said, of three-fourths of the whole crop, but the amount cannot be accurately ascertained—I have no doubt in saying, however, of considerably more than one-half the whole produce in Ireland. Of course this great failure in the potato crop had a material influence upon prices. It was impossible not to expect that the price of the corn required for the consumption of Ireland would be materially affected by the deficiency in the potato crop; but, on the other hand, there was, in the course of last year, a very large importation of foreign corn and flour, amounting altogether, according to a paper which has, I believe, been laid before this House, to the very large quantity of 4,800,000 quarters. This very large supply did not, for some time, enter into consumption. The harvest was remarkably early. It is reckoned by some that as much as six weeks' consumption of grain was still in store when the produce of the late harvest was brought into consumption; and, therefore, for a considerable period the corn imported from foreign ports, and which was admitted at the low duty of 4*s*. after the passing of the Corn Bill last Session, did not come into consumption. It was for this reason, as I conceive, that for some time there was no very considerable rise of prices; and the apprehension recently entertained that there would be a great rise in prices, was not then generally felt. You will see that, with respect to this country, the prices in October and in the course of November did not cause any very considerable apprehension with regard to the prices of wheat. The price of wheat in the first week of October was 54*s*.; in the second week, 56*s*. 10*d*.; in the third week, 59*s*. 10*d*.; in the fourth week, 60*s*. 10*d*.; and in the fifth week, 61*s*. 9*d*. In the first week of November, prices were 62*s*. 3*d*.; in the second week, 61*s*. 5*d*.; in the third week, 59*s*. 8*d*.; and in the fourth week, 59*s*.; thus showing rather a decline of prices from the middle of October to the end of November. But from that time there has been a very considerable rise in prices—a very considerable rise indeed when we consider what were the prices which occurred immediately after the time of harvest. The price of wheat in the first week of August last was 47*s*.; and it appears from a return I hold in my hand, that in the first week of September it was 49*s*. It has risen, during the present month, in the first week to 64*s*. 4*d*.; in the second week to 66*s*. 10*d*.; and the average price for the week ending on the 16th inst. is 70*s*. 3*d*., being a rise of 21*s*. since the first week in September. That rise of price in wheat justifies, as I conceive, very considerable apprehension as to the sufficiency of the supply. The rise in the price of barley has been still more remarkable. I have here the prices of barley for some years last past, which will show the very great increase of price in the present year. In the first week of January, 1842, the price of barley was 29*s*. 7*d*.; in the first week of January, 1843, it was 26*s*. 5*d*.; in the first week of January, 1844, it was 32*s*. 7*d*.; in the first week of January, 1845, it was 34*s*. 2*d*.; in the first week of January, 1846, it was 31*s*. 11*d*.; while in the first week in January, 1847, it was 44*s*. 3*d*.; in the second week, 46*s*. 5*d*.; and in the third week, 50*s*. This price of 50*s*. does not at all represent the prices that have been given for malting barley, which has fetched 66*s*., 67*s*., 68*s*., and up to 70*s*.; and still higher prices, I am told, may have been paid for it. This rise of price is very remarkable; because, in my comparison of prices, I have not taken solely years of great plenty, but years in which scarcity was felt to a considerable extent. I have said that this rise of price was, to a great degree, unexpected by those who were engaged in the trade. I should say, likewise, with regard to the neighbouring kingdom of France, where there is at present considerable apprehension of a very great rise in prices, that such an apprehension did not appear to be entertained in November, according to the best accounts the Government can obtain. I hold in my hand a translation of a circular of the Minister of Agriculture and Commerce, dated "Paris, November 16, 1846," from which I will read two or three passages. The Minister says—

> "In the first six divisions, which comprise fifty-seven departments, the amount of produce in wheat, meslin, rye, and barley, has been generally below the average of an ordinary year."

In another passage he says—

"Thus, as last year, the grain-producing districts are those which have suffered least, particularly the second division, from which Paris is principally supplied, where the harvest may be considered as having produced as much as in a good ordinary year."

With regard to the failure of the potato crop, after stating that there are not more than fifteen departments where this root has not partially failed, either from drought or disease, he adds that the total loss does not appear to be more than from a quarter to a third of the produce of an ordinary year. It appears, therefore, that there was in France, as in this country, a belief that the harvest was generally deficient, but not any apprehension that prices would very materially rise. Referring to the very great failure of the potato crop in Scotland and Ireland, which has given rise to those scenes of misery of which we have heard so much, and which have given us all so much pain, I will speak now as to the effects which that failure has produced on the general supply of food, and the want which it has occasioned. There are various statements made as to the extent of the failure of the potato root; but as to the money value of the loss, the general average statement is, that it is not less than 12,000,000*l.* sterling; and that not less than from 4,000,000 to 5,000,000 quarters of grain will be equivalent to supply the deficiency. I have already stated, that we have had, during the last year, a supply of 4,800,000 quarters of grain; but in reference to the supplies we may obtain during the remainder of the present year, before the next harvest, it is to be considered by the House that there are but very few parts of the world whence those supplies can be expected. The effects of a deficient harvest have been felt in France, in Germany, and in a very great part of the west of Europe; and measures have already been taken in many countries to supply the deficiency of food by permitting the freest importation of it from foreign countries. A regulation has lately been passed in France by which the duty on the importation of wheat into that country is now about 7*d.* a quarter; and another regulation has been made allowing ships belonging to foreign nations to enter the ports of France with grain. In many of the countries on the Rhine a similar law has passed; and in some, laws have likewise been adopted prohibiting the exportation of grain and potatoes. The stock of corn at Dantzic has been remarkably low, and would not furnish any very great supply to this country; and the last information, I think, that I had concerning it was, that the owners still retain it. Consequently, considering that the amount of grain is so small, and that it is retained from an expectation that very high prices will be obtained, there is no likelihood of any supply being sent thence to this country immediately. There are, however, two quarters from which considerable supplies can be expected. One is Odessa. Very considerable supplies have already been sent from there to France, which country has very much encouraged importation from Odessa; and the result has been that very large supplies have been sent to France from Odessa, amounting, I believe, to nearly 700,000 quarters. It is expected that in spring further supplies of corn will be sent to Odessa, which are not there now, and which may be available for this and other countries. There has been a very abundant harvest in America of all sorts of grain. The harvest of wheat has been abundant, and that of Indian corn has perhaps been the largest ever known. But at the same time we have not had hitherto any very great part of that supply sent to this country. There are, however, ships now in America, and other ships have been sent there from Liverpool and other ports, to bring to Europe the American wheat and Indian corn. It appears to me, that such being the state of the supplies, and such the deficiency in this country, we ought to remove every impediment in the way of the supply of this country from foreign ports. It might seem at a first glance that a duty of 4*s.* a quarter is not considerable, and, from the very large importation of last year, it might certainly be maintained that it had not prevented a considerable importation of foreign corn. But there are circumstances and cases in which that duty may, to a certain extent, limit the supply which may be brought to this country. For instance, for some time there has been a very nice balance between the prices in this country and in France. For a short time English wheat was sent from the eastern counties to France. That exportation lasted a very short time: the price rose, the balance was turned the other way, and corn was imported into this country; and in course of time the corn in bond here rose in price within 1*s.* of the price of the corn which had paid the 4*s.* duty. It is evident, with prices so very nicely balanced, that those who look to make a profit by the sale of a cargo of wheat, may be influenced by just the turn of price which this 4*s.* duty makes. For instance, supposing that the price at London of wheat were 63*s.* a quarter, while, at the same time it was 62*s.* at Havre, the price at Havre would make it more worth the importer's while to take the cargo to Havre; and thus the amount of the 4*s.* duty makes a difference. In many circumstances, supposing that there had not been this want in France—I should say, in most ordinary cases, even under the visitation of such a calamity as has now happened to this country, that the 4*s.* duty would hardly have prevented any quantity of grain from being brought to this country; but when there exists a competition for the food brought from America and other places, the imposition of a restriction to that amount may make a difference—be it inconsiderable or considerable—in the quantity imported into this country. I say that it is hardly in our power to speculate as to what may be the quantity of corn brought to this country by the removal of that restriction on its importation. It might be said that it would not be much; that it would be but a small quantity; and that, therefore, it is not worth while to legislate with respect to it; but I maintain, that in the circumstances I have stated, it is enough to say that the duty is a restriction on the importation of grain; preventing thereby corn which would otherwise come to this country for the food of the people being brought to it. Under these circumstances, I say that Parliament ought to take that duty off. I shall propose, therefore, that all duties on foreign corn shall be suspended by law till the 1st of September in the present year. I think that that will afford sufficient time for bringing the corn from foreign countries; and it will be left for Parliament afterwards, at another period of the Session, to decide whether it will be necessary to continue the suspension, or to revive the existing law. I do not, from the disposition shown the other night by the whole House, expect any opposition to my present proposal; and I do not think that there is any party in the House, which, according to its principles, ought to oppose the proposition. With respect to the advocates of protection and corn laws, they ven when they declared the policy of Parliament was in favour of restriction and protection, never denied that there might be circumstances in the state of the country which ought at once, at the request of any Government, to lead to the suspension of the duties. In 1756, 1766, 1791, 1800, and at various other periods, those protective laws had been suspended; whilst those who proposed the suspension were the advocates of protection. With respect to those who take the view that there ought to be no restriction on the importation of corn—who have agreed that in February, 1849, those duties should be reduced to 1*s.*—they certainly can have no difficulty in saying at the present time that those duties ought to be suspended; because they could hardly hold that that which they consider a good law in times of the greatest abundance and plentiful harvests—viz., a law allowing the free and unrestricted importation of foreign corn—ought not to be the law at a time when great pressure exists, and when there is a difficulty in obtaining a sufficient supply of food for the people. I will now pass to another subject, which is, as I have stated, closely connected with that on which I have just been addressing the House, viz., the Navigation Laws. With respect to those laws, I should likewise say that the present state of things leads to considerable difficulty with respect to the importation of corn, owing to the very high rate of freights demanded. In some instances these rates have been enhanced by particular circumstances. In the United States, for instance, they have been enhanced by the demand of the American Government for shipping to take guns and stores to the coast of Mexico; but the demand for shipping for the importation of foreign corn has of itself raised the rate of freights. I will state to the House what is the ordinary freight for a quarter of corn from various places to this country, and what is at present paid. From the Danube the ordinary rate of freight is 10*s.* a quarter; but the present rate is 16*s.* 6*d.* to 17*s.* From Odessa the ordinary rate is 8*s.*, and the present rate is 13*s.* to 13*s.* 6*d.* From the United States the ordinary rate is 5*s.*; the present rate is 12*s.* 6*d.* to 13*s.* From the Baltic the ordinary rate is 3*s.* 9*d.* to 4*s.* 6*d.*; the present, supposing the navigation were open, would be from 5*s.* to 5*s.* 6*d.* The increase in the rate of freight is still more remarkable as affecting the supply of Ireland. For instance, the ordinary rate of freight from London to Cork varies from 1*s.* to 1*s.* 3*d.* a quarter, and at times is considerably below that;

but at present the rate of freight is from 3*s.* to 3*s.* 6*d.*, and at the same time there is considerable difficulty in finding vessels. Now, it is obvious that if we should permit corn to be imported in the ships of all foreign countries, thereby suspending the navigation laws, we should to a certain degree lower the rates of freight, and likewise allow of some more vessels to be employed in the trade between England and Ireland, from which the shipping is at present diverted by the high rates to be obtained for carrying from foreign ports. At this time of pressure these impediments ought not to exist, and I therefore propose the suspension of the navigation laws as regards the importation of grain from foreign countries till the 1st of September next. With respect to the existing law relating to the importation of grain, I do not propose to make any comment either for or against it. All I maintain now is, that whether that law be politic or impolitic, the present occasion is one when its operation ought to be suspended. I do not know that I need say more at the present moment. I do not wish to provoke any hostility by anything that may fall from me on this occasion, and I shall, therefore, conclude by proposing—

> "That the Chairman be directed to move the House that leave be given to bring in a Bill to suspend for a time to be limited, the Duties on the Importation of Corn."

MR. BANKES rose to second the Motion of the noble Lord, and in presenting himself to the notice of the Committee he felt no difficulty, in consequence of the tone in which the noble Lord had made his proposition. The noble Lord had stated the other night that from this temporary suspension of the duties on corn he anticipated no essential benefit; and he could not but expect that such was the feeling of the noble Lord, because, if the noble Lord had thought that any essential benefit would be derived from the suspension, Parliament would have been called together at an earlier period. The noble Lord was aware that those who maintained the principle that duties were for the benefit of the country imposed on the importation of corn, were, throughout the whole course of last year, at any period when the pressure on Ireland was adverted to, ready to concur in the immediate suspension of the duties. Consequently the noble Lord must have known that, if in the exercise of his duty he had thought it expedient to bring Parliament together at an earlier period, though it might have been inconvenient for the Irish Members to attend, yet the English Members, on behalf of Ireland, would, with the greatest readiness and good will, have sanctioned a measure for the suspension of the corn duties, or any other measure which could have been proved to them to be beneficial to Ireland. With respect to the navigation laws, he confessed it did appear to him that the noble Lord had a greater difficulty in excusing himself for not calling Parliament together at an earlier period. For they were told now, and had heard before, that there were quantities of grain to be obtained in different parts of the world, which were only not in this country on account of the difficulty of transport, and that consequently, a benefit was to be obtained by the suspension of the navigation laws. Now, it was difficult to conjecture the reason why a vigilant Ministry did not take the earliest opportunity of affording facilities for the introduction into this country of that grain which they knew was to be had, the only difficulty being the means of conveying it. If, therefore, so much benefit was now to be derived from a suspension of the navigation laws, he asked why was a single week unnecessarily delayed in promoting that measure, for, as he had already observed, if it had been inconvenient for the Irish Members to attend, the English Members would have been ready to give the Government every facility with respect to such a proceeding? In reference to the result of the last harvest, his information differed in one respect from the account given by the noble Lord. He believed that there was more than an average crop in the west of England, but that the quality was not particularly fine. The quantity, however, was, he trusted, sufficient to supply the whole of that part of England, even to the extent of making up for the deficiency of the potato crop. With respect to the rise of prices, whatever might have been the opinion of the Government, he must be allowed to say, that in the part of the country which he had referred to, this rise in price was in a great degree anticipated. He did not know whether this anticipation was owing to the contiguity of that part of the country to France causing the people to be aware at an earlier period of the dearth apprehended by their neighbours; but this he did know, that by the farmers there a rise of prices was anticipated; and he might mention it to the credit of these farmers, that they did not withhold their grain from the market, but continued a regular and steady supply, rather larger than on ordinary occasions, notwithstanding the expectation they entertained that higher prices might, at a more distant period, be obtained. In one respect, at least, the anticipations which had been entertained by those who had advocated protective duties on corn, had not turned out to be fallacious. It had been their view that at the period when in this country the want of corn might be felt, it would be found that the parties holding corn in the northern countries of Europe, would still retain and guide their prices by the prices in the British market, however large might be the quantities they possessed. Such appeared to be the case now, and it was to other and more distant countries this country had now to look for the supply of grain required. He had sincere satisfaction in expressing on this occasion his full, free, and entire concurrence in the proposition of the noble Lord; but he shared with the noble Lord the apprehension that no great benefit would result from the suspension of the duties. Nevertheless, if the suspension could be of the smallest benefit, it ought not to be delayed one moment. The period for which the duty was to be suspended, was certainly longer than had been generally anticipated; but it would not be proper to cavil about the precise time or period. They must rely on the Government having used a sound discretion with respect to the proposition now made; and all he had to add on his own part, and he believed he spoke the sentiments of many others, was, that his acquiescence in the Motion was given with the greatest possible good will. It had been said the other night by the hon. and learned Member for Bath, that the right hon. Baronet the Member for Tamworth was entitled to the greatest credit for his foresight in respect to the famine in Ireland. Now, all he had to observe with respect to that remark was, that the right hon. Baronet the Member for Tamworth met with no opposition in regard to any remedy he proposed for the relief of famine in Ireland. The only measure as respected Ireland in regard to which he met opposition was the Coercion Bill; and he did not know whether the hon. and learned Member for Bath considered that the passing of the Coercion Bill would have relieved the famine in Ireland. He thought it right to remind the hon. and learned Member, that, with regard to famine in Ireland, so far as it was anticipated by the right hon. Baronet the Member for Tamworth, that right hon. Baronet met with no opposition whatever. Every measure he proposed for the relief of Ireland was instantly acquiesced in; and the offer made over and over again by the agricultural Members to consent to the suspension of the duties on corn, was rejected by the right hon. Baronet. Under these circumstances, the advocates of protective duties would not appear to the Irish Members to deserve any blame. They had never stood in the way of relief to Ireland, and never would. Ireland would find none more ready to cooperate for her benefit.

Sir H. W. BARRON only regretted that Parliament had not met sooner, and agreed to this Motion at an earlier period. In Waterford last week the price of corn was 82*s.*; how could a man, with a family of five or six to support on 10*d.* a day, buy enough of it to furnish them with a subsistence? Thousands of unfortunate labourers on the public works were living upon one scanty meal a day. The House and this country were not yet aware of the frightful distress and destitution of millions in Ireland. At a poorhouse in the union of Waterford, last Thursday, 107 applicants were refused, through want of room to receive them. The medical officers reported to the board that it would be dangerous to the lives alike of the applicants and inmates to admit any more persons into the already overcrowded wards. The board, however, taking a step beyond the law perhaps, engaged a large store on the next day, capable of containing 1,100 individuals, and hoped thus to be able now to relieve every individual who applied. It had been stated in the House flippantly, but most ignorantly, that the landlords of Ireland had not done their duty on this occasion. He had attended as chairman in four baronies in his own county, and begged to state most emphatically to the House, and to this great and generous nation, that there was not a breath of dissent from any one of the landlords or ratepayers in taxing themselves to the very last shilling their property would bear, for the relief of the distressed. In one of those baronies in which he had property himself, the landlords and ratepayers taxed themselves without a dissentient voice for the support of the poor, for only three months, to the amount of 28*s.* in the pound upon their rental. He had attentively observed their proceedings in three counties, and had not seen a single landlord stand up and withhold his assent to the great principle, that the property of the country was bound to support the destitution of the people. When he heard the assertions which were dealt out by the press of this country, and retailed in the House at second-hand by some second-rate lawyer, he must protest in the strongest terms that the courtesy of the House, or of Gentlemen, would permit, and say that there was not a single word of truth in these calumnious assertions. A body of men never existed who showed themselves more devoted to the interests of the poor than the landlords of Ireland, and more willing to sacrifice every shilling of their property for the support of the destitute. Never did a body of men come forward so magnanimously as they had done on this most trying of trying occasions. Though great was the calamity impending over his unfortunate country, he hoped that great good might ultimately flow from it, and that when the ordeal was past there would be found to spring out of it something which would raise the condition of the people, and lead all to unite for the general welfare of that kingdom.

MR. GOULBURN felt it to be perfectly natural for an hon. Member who had recently arrived from scenes which sufficiently affected even those who heard of them at a distance, to press upon the House the extent of the calamity which had visited his country, and to feel irritated by observations reflecting, in his opinion, upon the character of his countrymen, and take the earliest opportunity of indignantly repelling those reflections; but the hon. Baronet must not suppose that he was in the least degree indifferent to the sufferings of that country, if he did not think this the fit occasion for entering into a discussion upon that subject. The distress in Ireland was universally acknowledged; and every hon. Member, the English Members as strongly as the Irish, felt the necessity and propriety of acting upon that knowledge, and doing all that could be done by way of relief and assistance. Entirely concurring in the measure proposed by the noble Lord, he thought it so essential that the concurrence in the measure should be universal, and should carry with it to the minds of the Irish people a conviction of the interest felt in their welfare, that he would not even take the opportunity which the present discussion might afford to advert to a past period when the House might have been assembled, and when a proceeding of this kind might have been resorted to with greater advantage than at present. He was prepared to make allowances for the Government, in their postponing it to this time; and he would not interrupt the unanimity which prevailed by showing how much more effectual it might at an earlier period have proved. The question before the House, was, were we likely to derive advantage from the measure still, if not to the same extent as we might once have done? To the proposition that we were likely, he gave his entire assent. Although the stock of corn upon which we had to operate was now less than it would have been at an antecedent period, and great part of it was already sold, and engaged to be delivered to customers in the various nations competing for it, there was a surplus disposable at the present moment, and it was desirable that we should obtain possession of it; and, as the continuance of the duty might by possibility divert from our shores, to other distressed countries, that further supply which we might have a prospect of obtaining, it was right that the duty should be suspended. With respect to the suspension of the navigation laws, the argument applied with even additional force; for France had suspended her navigation laws for the purpose of admitting corn, and therefore we had not the same benefit of our own shipping as we should have had if France had not made that arrangement. The British ships, which formerly could not have carried American corn into the ports of France, owing to the regulations of that country, had now ample opportunity of doing so; and even though loaded in America with the intention of coming to this kingdom, they would hear at the first port that they might proceed to France; and if the price at that moment should be more favourable there, we should, unless our navigation laws also were suspended, deprive ourselves of supplies coming to Europe in British ships, and actually intended for us. In order, therefore, to put ourselves upon an equal footing with foreign countries, the suspension of the navigation laws during this urgent period of distress was a measure from which no one could be disposed to withhold assent, and, for his own part, he assented to it most willingly. The House would not suppose that he interposed with any objection or obstacle, if he added that he reserved his right to discuss the question of any further suspension of the navigation laws, or of the propriety of interfering with them upon any other occasion hereafter, either in the matter of corn or with respect to other commodities; nor must he be precluded by this vote from considering any point which might hereafter arise with regard to those laws. He had only further to express his hope, that these measures might be the means of adding to our supply of food, and that those who were now suffering the greatest distress in the sister kingdom would see, in the readiness with which interests in this country had given up points heretofore contended for as most important, evidence of the strong liberal feeling of the British Parliament towards a part of the empire suffering, under the hand of Providence, the severest calamity that could be inflicted upon a nation; and he trusted that the unanimity with which Parliament was acting upon this occasion would create a degree of satisfaction that might tend to alleviate the misery which all were so anxious to mitigate.

Mr. EWART had listened with some surprise, and some incredulity, to one statement in the speech of the hon. Member for Dorset (Mr. Bankes), that the farmers had benevolently brought their corn to market, at a time when they anticipated that prices were about to rise. Free-trader as he was, he hardly knew how he should have had the heart to go to the extent he had sometimes done, if he had been aware that he was dealing with such generous-minded individuals. But, with all respect for the hon. Member, this case (to use the language of the newspapers) "required confirmation." The conduct of the commercial Minister of France in the suspension of the navigation laws had been worthy of all praise, and yet, although the example had long been before the eyes of the Government, they did not follow it until three or four months after the necessity had occurred. He had been one of those Members who had supported the principles of free trade from the first in that House, and he was cordially pleased to find that the hon. Member for Dorsetshire had voted for a temporary suspension of the navigation laws. As an advocate for total repeal of commercial restrictions, he preferred that plan to a temporary suspension. He only regretted that Her Majesty's Ministers had not come to a resolution for that total repeal; and he thought the same observation might be applied to the navigation laws. Since, however, the Government would not consent to the total repeal, however much he regretted it, he would assent to the temporary measure. There were no old associations to justify the retention of the navigation laws. They only took their rise in the reign of Henry VII., and were confirmed in the time of the Protector, and in that of Charles II., he believed, simply in consequence of our enmity to the Dutch at that time. He repeated that he would much rather the Ministry should have substituted, for temporary suspension the entire abrogation of those laws, yet he did not wish to disturb the unanimity of the debate by making any Motion on the subject. But he could not help observing that labour in this country could never be sufficiently rewarded until they did away with the restrictions on commerce.

The CHANCELLOR of the EXCHEQUER, though very sensible of the forbearance of the right hon. Gentleman (Mr. Goulburn) in not dwelling upon the conduct of the Government for not earlier proposing this measure, yet thought that upon a question of this importance it was desirable that he should state what were the grounds upon which they deemed a sufficient necessity for it not established in October, and those altered circumstances which rendered it, in their opinion, an imperative duty at this moment. In September, the price of corn was low; and in October, the prices of corn rose, apparently owing to speculation; for as soon as the determination of the Government not to open the ports was known, prices immediately fell, and continued to do so through the month of November. At the end of October, also, intelligence came from the United States of very large supplies having come down to the ports ready for shipment, and which were likely to come to this country, and at no great distance of time. Inquiries were made of the merchants at Liverpool and elsewhere, and the Government were told that a considerable number of vessels had gone out, attracted by the high freight from America, and that in all probability very large arrivals would take place shortly. Much more recently the number of vessels loading in America, which had gone out from this country for the purpose of bringing home corn, was very considerable. He had in his hand a letter from Liverpool, dated January the 14th, stating that at that time there were at New York, loading for Great Britain and Ireland, no less than thirty-seven vessels, of a tonnage of 25,000 tons; and at New Orleans, thirty-three vessels, of 19,000 tons; and that, in addition to that, twenty-nine vessels, of 17,000 tons, had sailed from Liverpool for America within the preceding week; and it was extremely probable that the cargoes with which they would return would be corn. That would be upwards of seventy vessels that were now loading, which would, in all probability, bring home corn from America. There did not seem, therefore, in October, to be any likelihood that large supplies would not be brought into this country, or that, so far as corn could be brought thence before the navigation closed, there would be any want of supplies. It was true, that the expectations held out to the Government by the merchants, had been to a considerable extent disappointed; corn had not come to the extent anticipated, though the imports had considerably increased within the last two or three weeks, as was shown by a return just laid on the Table. At the present moment, however, we were in what might be called the dead part of the year; the spring trade would begin before long, when there would be a much greater demand for freight, and therefore it was become much more necessary to relax these navigation laws, which might prevent the importation of corn in the vessels of any nation at a time when there would be a greater competition for shipping. The navigation was closed for the winter in the interior of America and in the Baltic; but these and other parts, as, for instance, Odessa and Galatz, would soon be open, and corn would be brought down to the seaboard, for the shipment of which to this country facilities might be afforded by the employment of foreign vessels which were nearer to these ports. He was very confident that in the spring and summer this country would receive large importations of corn. Up to the present time they had not received any Indian corn of the crop of 1846, which was described as the largest crop ever known in the United States. He believed that nearly the whole disposable crop of 1845 had been brought to this country; but the crop of 1846 would not be available for exportation till December or January. The supply through New Orleans would arrive before many weeks had elapsed; but that which was expected from the northern parts of the United States could not be brought to the seaboard till the internal navigation was opened. These considerations showed the great advantages which might be anticipated from the adoption, at this time, of the measure now proposed, and which could not have been gained by any earlier suspension of the navigation laws. He was anxious to take the present opportunity of stating to the House the course which the Government had pursued, with the view of promoting the importation of corn into Ireland and providing supplies for that country. So much misapprehension had prevailed, and so many statements had been made on former occasions in reference to this subject, that he hoped he might be permitted to offer an explanation of the course which the Government had taken with regard to Ireland. It would be remembered that at the close of last Session of Parliament, the Government was asked whether it were prepared to undertake to supply Ireland with corn? And the assurance his noble Friend (Lord J. Russell) had given—an assurance he (the Chancellor of the Exchequer) had afterwards repeated—was to this effect, that the Government would not be importers of corn—that whatever corn they might buy, should be bought in this country; but that certainly they would not be importers. In regard to the proceedings of the late Government, they, under different circumstances, had taken a different course. They imported Indian corn with the view of introducing a new trade and a new article of consumption for the great benefit of Ireland; and one element essential to the success of the experiment was, the secrecy with which the operations of the Government were conducted. Apprehensions were naturally entertained by the merchants last summer, that similar operations might be repeated; and when the question was put to the Government by merchants in different parts of the country, it became absolutely necessary to form a definitive resolution on the subject. No half measures were possible, because a partial interference would have paralysed the exertions of private individuals; and experience had always shown that the enterprise of private individuals served far more effectually to secure an adequate supply of food than any Government agency which could be devised. His firm conviction was, that by the private enterprise of merchants a larger supply of food would be brought into the country, than could be secured by any exertions which the Government might make. But there were peculiar circumstances which rendered a deviation from ordinary rules advisable in regard to the west coast of Ireland, which was difficult of access in winter, and which was not likely to obtain a supply by the ordinary means of trade at that period. The Government, therefore, undertook to send supplies of corn to the west coast of Ireland. In pursuance of that determination they had been perpetually and continually buyers of corn in this country from a very early period in the autumn; but they had entered the market so as not to raise the price of corn to the poor; and it must be remembered that it was not only the poor of Ireland who were in want of an adequate supply of food—there was great distress in many parts of Scotland; and, if the Government had come into the market as avowed purchasers of food, they would have enhanced the price to the people of this country, who, by means of their own resources or private charity, had to obtain the necessaries of life; so that the result might have been, that, instead of having to support a large number of poor in Ireland, they would have had to maintain those whom their own operations had deprived of a supply of food upon reasonable terms. The orders, therefore, which were given were to buy, always following, but never leading the market. The Government bought all the Indian corn which was to be found; for some weeks there was none to be had except a small quantity held at a fancy price. They then bought barley, then rice; and lately hardly any of the latter article was to be bought either in London or at Liverpool. By these means the Government had been able to supply the depôts upon the western coast of Ireland. His noble Friend had stated that the quantity of corn, consisting of wheat, Indian corn, &c., which had been imported by private merchants into this country in the last seven months of last year was 3,728,000 quarters. The average consumption of foreign corn for that period was about 468,000 quarters; and if that were deducted from the quantity brought in, and assuming that whatever quantity there was of potatoes could serve only for two months and a half, the quantity actually imported into the country would be sufficient for the support of 8,500,000 of the people for four months and a half. The quantity actually imported was more than could have been expected, more than any one seemed to have imagined. Among extensive purchasers for the supply of Ireland he might mention Mr. Russell, of Limerick, who had uniformly given a large price in the English market. It was difficult to obtain any account of the quantity imported into Ireland; but there was not the least doubt that it was very considerable. In the beginning of December, he (the Chancellor of the Exchequer) had received a letter from Liverpool, stating that thirty-three vessels were loading there with provisions for Ireland. One great deficiency as regarded the supply of food in that country, was the want of mill-power. This year the Government had left all the Irish mills for private grinding; but since the beginning of autumn they had employed the Admiralty mills at Plymouth, Portsmouth, and Deptford, and to some extent at Malta; and others on the river, and in Essex also, had been constantly at work throughout the autumn preparing supplies of Indian corn, meal, and barley. At an early period nine large depôts had been established in different parts of Ireland. Up to the present time there were twenty-six depôts in all; twenty-five of which were to the west of the Shannon. There were four in Donegal, two in Galway, two in Clare, three or four in Cork, besides one at Banagher, a reserve depôt at Dublin, &c. Therefore, as regarded either the supply of food, or the establishment of depôts, which an hon. Gentleman seemed to think the Government had entirely neglected, measures had been taken for meeting the emergency when the time arrived to fall back on the resources thus provided. It was perfectly true that, generally speaking, those depôts had not till recently been opened. Last year there was a pressure to open the depôts at an early period of the year, which was resisted by the Government. It was thought desirable that the depôts should be reserved for the coming emergency; and that so long as the people could they should be left to maintain themselves. Some of these depôts, however, never had been closed throughout the whole autumn. The depôts in Galway were opened from time to time in the course of the autumn, as were also those in Westport and Sligo. But in many cases it was found that the moment the Government interfered, all private enterprise ceased. Of one place where there was a depôt, it had been stated that—

> "The destitution in the neighbourhood of Castletown (Bearhaven) has been greatly aggravated by the arrival of a commissariat officer, rumours having gone abroad that the Government was about to open a food depôt, which has prevented commercial people from sending in supplies of food as heretofore. The consequence has been,

that the supplies in the town are exhausted, and the whole district is now without food."

It was believed that up to about Christmas there would be food to be obtained, but that after Christmas the Government must open their depôts. Orders had been issued to open them, then, so soon as it should be found necessary, towards the end of December. Gentlemen had spoken in terms most unwisely chosen of forestalling and regrating. It was impossible, except at high prices, to obtain a large supply of corn, when corn was scarce and had to be brought from distant and unusual sources of supply; and if that was about to take place, which he anticipated, namely, that the Irish people would not maintain themselves to the same extent as hitherto, on food grown by themselves, it was absolutely necessary, for the existence of that people, that there should be those who would supply them with the food, which in their altered circumstances they would have to purchase. The greatest benefit which could, indeed, be conferred on the population of Ireland was to encourage the establishment of small dealers and shops in every village to supply food; and the propriety not only of abstaining from interference with efforts to establish these, but of encouraging their establishment where they did not exist, had been pressed upon the relief committees. When it was asserted that no measures had been taken to supply food, Gentlemen should recollect that at this moment half a million of able-bodied men were supported on the relief works. Their wages supported themselves and their families. Where retail dealers did not exist, the relief committees were established to perform the functions of such persons; and without local agency, without the cooperation of those who were acquainted with the people, it was utterly impossible that the task of affording them relief could be adequately performed. In various quarters the remark had been made that the Government had taken no steps for the relief of the aged and infirm poor out of the workhouse. It had been said the previous night that, if any such steps had been taken, they could have been so only within the last few days. But particular provisions had been made for the aged and infirm when the workhouses were full, by means of the relief committees making a gratuitous distribution of food. Though the Government did not permit relief committees acting with money contributed by the Government to sell food under market price; when the pressure became severe, they had not restricted the relief committees from giving food; and latterly they had strongly urged them to do so. In a return which would, he hoped, be laid the following day on the Table of the House, he found a letter, from the commissariat relief officer, in Dublin, dated so far back as December the 3rd, in which it was stated, that—

> "The regulations of the Government only authorize gratuitous relief out of funds to which the Lord Lieutenant adds a donation, when limited to the actually infirm poor, and then only in unions where the workhouses are full."

He next came to the case of Skibbereen. Among the papers, in the return of which he had spoken, was a report from Mr. Inglis, assistant commissary-general, dated Skibbereen, December 21. A Government officer had been sent down to that place; and the misfortune in Ireland was, that nobody seemed inclined to move till a Government officer made his appearance. Mr. Inglis, referring to a local relief committee, said—

> "Together with this committee I have had the able assistance of several of the most respectable persons in the place, who have subscribed 85*l*., and paid it into the bank, and I have met them with a similar sum, making 170*l*., which will enable us to open two large establishments for the daily supply of soup, to a large and starving number of people, for nearly two months. And I have made them a further promise, that if they comply with the conditions I have made with them, I will solicit leave to give them a further sum."

There was another report, from which it appeared that the mortality in Skibbereen had occurred among a certain class. There were considerable numbers of people in the outskirts of towns in Ireland who were understood to subsist without regular means of obtaining a livelihood on the surplus potatoes given to them in charity, and who were thrown into a state of absolute destitution when this resource no longer existed. It was upon charity that such persons subsisted; and it was only through the agency of the relief committees that they could be reached. They were found in and about all the towns of Ireland. The mortality was mentioned in a report, dated Skibbereen, December 23. "But," it was added—

> "But you must recollect that this mortality is confined to a certain class of persons, who are always to be found in and about all towns in Ireland, such as the labouring people and beggars. The country people, generally, never looked more healthy, and, I am told, will have provisions till about May next."

And when the officers in Ireland were accused of not having taken such measures as they ought, to promote this mode of relief, he begged to read an extract of a letter, dated December 28, from Sir Randolph Routh, in which it was stated, with reference to a previous letter, that—

> "The object of it is to extend to all those remote places at the south-west the advantage of the same arrangements as those now in force at Skibbereen for the establishment of soup-shops, which, indeed, in the inability of these people to purchase the more expensive food, are almost their only resource."

On December 30, he reported that—

> "The soup system promises to be a great resource, and I am endeavouring to turn the views of the committees to it."

And of the same date he wrote to Commissary General Hewetson:—

> "In the distribution of soup, I think the precedent established at Skibbereen may very properly be carried out by the committees in the county of Clare." "We must understand," he observed, "that the depôts in the western districts are to be henceforth opened for the sale of food, as far as may be prudent and necessary; and on all these questions you will keep me well informed, so that the authorities here and at home may be aware of the course we are pursuing, and the grounds on which we act."

Writing to the officer stationed in the counties of Roscommon and Leitrim, on the 2nd of January, he says—

> "The Government regulations allow of gratuitous issues to the infirm poor, to widows, orphans, and to children where the supporting member of the family is incapable, from sickness or other cause, to maintain them. If any case, where a small subscription only can be raised, should appear to you of great emergency or distress, you will not fail to represent it, so that the extent of the grant may be brought under special consideration, and be recommended more in accordance with the amount of distress than the amount subscribed."

Then, referring to a letter which had been received about the distress at Skibbereen, he said, in a letter to Mr. Trevelyan, dated January 7, that the writer must be in some error:—

> "He says it is all want of food; whereas at Skibbereen there is a Cork house, George and Co., whose agent is Mr. Swanton, who are proprietors of two large mills, and are retailing meal in any quantity required; and our store is also open. So that food is not wanting, but rather the money to buy it. Only one of our soup-kitchens was at work by last advices from Skibbereen, the second cauldron not having arrived from Cork. It was feeding about 1,500 persons daily."

Speaking of the same district, on January 11, Sir Randolph said—

> "Before Mr. Inglis left, two soup-kitchens were established, but to one of them a new boiler is expected from Cork, and must be now in operation. One boiler supplied about 1,200 persons daily with a quart each. Mr. C. C. Hughes advises me by this day's post that money is almost daily arriving for the soup fund; but he had not been able to ascertain the actual amount received. I observe the issues from his depôt this past week were, fifty-four sacks of Indian corn meal (about seven tons), and ninety-seven cwt. of biscuit."

He begged the House to observe the amount of food which this supply contained. It was about 26,544 lb., being sufficient for 3,792 persons for a week, at the rate of a pound a day. Elsewhere private exertions had produced the best results. Mr. Bishop, addressing Sir Randolph Routh, on the 9th of January, with respect to the parish of Kilmoe, said—

> "The Kilmoe committee bring large supplies from Cork, and upon a very limited fund they have purchased and sold eighty-five tons of meal within a short time. At present they are nearly out of meal, in consequence of the severity of the weather preventing any vessel touching here from Cork. I have recommended an issue to them from the depôt at Skibbereen."

The same course was taken elsewhere; and he believed that when the papers were laid before the House, hon. Members would see that the Government had not been neglectful of their duty. He assured the House that Government would continue to do all in their power to mitigate the evil; but he did hope that the landlords and gentry would exert themselves also, for, without that, all that Government could do would be of little avail. Much depended upon local effort, and where that was found in operation, Government would not fail to aid the parties liberally. That the whole population would be preserved from starvation, even if they did their best, he was not sanguine enough to believe. The calamity was such, and so extensive, that he feared many victims must fall; but without local efforts, he repeated, that it was impossible the Government could expect any measure of success at all.

Mr. HUME said, that a great deal of time and discussion might have been saved on the two previous evenings had the papers which had just been read by the Chancellor of the Exchequer been put in possession of the House as soon as it had met. There was, in his opinion, great neglect in not laying these papers before them at once, as the time wasted in hearing the charges brought against the Government, to which they furnished a complete answer, would have been appropriated to something more useful to the country. Such a course would have had another good effect, inasmuch as it would have prevented the impression from going abroad that the Government had been doing nothing, with Ireland on the brink of starvation. He would state to the House and to the noble Lord (Lord J. Russell), that he had seldom been so much disappointed as he had been that night. He had hoped that the propositions of the noble Lord would have been of a far more comprehensive and permanent character than he was sorry to say they were; that the ports were to have been at once thrown open, and in perpetuity, instead of still leaning to old and antiquated notions of trade, and keeping the trade of the country bound and restricted by these notions as long as it was possible to keep it. He would submit to the noble Lord, that the country expected of him that he would throw open the ports, not only as a temporary measure, but as one of a permanent character. The protection still afforded to the agriculturists had now only two years to exist; and was this to be regarded as an obstacle in the way of a measure which, unless it was of a comprehensive and permanent nature, would not answer the purpose for which it was designed? He would state candidly to the noble Lord that he was dissatisfied with the limited measures which he had just proposed. With regard to the navigation laws, he certainly did expect a more liberal exposition of Ministerial policy. It was utterly impossible for any man, who read the proceedings at Montreal, and the proceedings which had taken place in other colonies, in reference to this subject, to believe that the Government could long maintain the authority of the mother country over some of these colonies, if it deprived them, as they were now deprived, by the restrictive provisions of the navigation laws, of adequate means for the free and speedy transit of their produce to the English market. What was the situation of the colonial farmer in America, as compared with the American farmer? Why, the American farmer had at this moment an advantage of no less than one dollar (4*s.* 2*d.* sterling) per barrel on flour over the Canadian farmer. The English merchant found it preferable to buy flour at four dollars a barrel in New York, to purchasing it at three dollars in Montreal. The Canadian exporter had this additional difficulty to contend against—in that he had to pay about 4*s.* 6*d.* per ton for shipping, when his competitor could get as much tonnage as he wanted for 3*s.* They had taken from the colonies what they considered to be protection, and it was now the least that we could do for them, to enable them to export their produce to our markets in cheap shipping. He submitted to the noble Lord, that this was a question which must yet occupy the attention of the Government and of the House. He (Mr. Hume) expected that along with such a measure some hints would have been thrown out of other measures which would enable British shipping to compete with and to trade to the whole world. Let them take off the duty now chargeable upon timber, and from off the other articles which enter into the construction of vessels, and he should be glad to know what there was to prevent England, so eminent in every other branch of manufacture, from being able to compete, and that too with the most complete success, with the shipping of the whole world. She would do this beyond all question if her Government could only be prevailed upon to place her shipwrights and her shipowners on their proper footing. In reference to this all-important subject, he begged leave to refer the noble Lord to the evidence adduced before the Import Duties' Committee in 1840. One witness in his evidence before that Committee stated that it was utterly impossible, with the disparity existing between the vessels of this and of foreign countries, as regarded their cost, that our ships could freely and successfully compete with those of foreign countries with which they were nevertheless forced to compete. At Rio Janeiro there were at one time 140 vessels, of which number one half were British, their hulls costing 50 per cent more than did the hulls of those with which they were compelled to compete. Why should not the noble Lord carry out to their fullest extent the free-trade principles which were now supposed to regulate the policy of this country? Why should he not come to the conclusion, which to him (Mr. Hume) appeared but a reasonable one—that if the Government gave our shipbuilders and shipowners the advantage of being able to procure the materials necessary for the construction of ships at the same price as foreign owners got them for, they would have as good and as cheap manufacturers of ships in this country, as they had good and cheap manufacturers of many other articles? Another witness before the Import Duties' Committee, Mr. Mitchell, from Leith, himself, he (Mr. Hume) believed, a shipbuilder, stated that he could not build ships but at an expense of 40 or 50 per cent higher than in Sweden. This gentleman strongly advised a removal of all duties pressing upon the construction of ships. All that the shipbuilders of this country wanted to enable them to set competition from without at defiance, was cheap timber. The planking which they used in the construction of ships was, most of it, taxed about 100 per cent, and the hard timber about 50 per cent. It was impossible, when such was the case, to expect that they could have a free and fair competition with other countries, unless some such steps were taken to relieve the shipowners. If the Government would only have the courage to do this, England would speedily become the manufactory of ships for a great portion of the world—to the same extent as she now supplied so large a portion of it with other manufactured articles. It was certainly a very inconsistent course, to use no other term, for the Government to pursue, to have prayers offered up throughout the land to avert the impending famine, whilst it was at the same time permitting obstacles to exist in the way of an adequate supply of provisions. Let the Government take a comprehensive view of the whole subject, and repeal those laws, both as regarded the colonies and the mother country. He had no hesitation in saying that if they had been repealed five months ago, we should have had much larger supplies of food on hand than we had at present, and that unless they were finally and completely repealed, little or nothing effective could be done in the way of remedying the evils which were now pressing upon the country.

Lord J. RUSSELL: The propositions which have just emanated from the hon. Gentleman are not characterized by his usual good sense. I have already stated to the House that my object and desire under existing circumstances, with the present dearth of provisions in Ireland, were to take immediate measures by which the evils of famine might be speedily and effectively remedied. Now, my hon. Friend tells me, that this is not the proper course for me to take. I am told by him that I should not have thrown myself upon measures of immediate relief, but that there are three separate and distinct questions with which I should have grappled. The first of these is the total repeal of the corn laws—for which I spoke last year, and which I should have been glad to have seen effected; but in reference to which I came to the determination that it was then impracticable, and that the best chance of getting them repealed lay in assenting to the proposal of the right hon. Gentleman (Sir R. Peel) then at the head of the Government, postponing that repeal until 1849. If I now proposed that repeal, we should have the same struggle over again which we had last year, with fewer chances of success. The next thing which the hon. Gentleman proposes is, that the Government should advise the abrogation of the navigation laws, and thus encounter the opposition just suggested by the hon. Gentleman the Member for the University of Cambridge (Mr. Goulburn), together with that of all those who are in favour of the continuance of these laws. My hon. Friend then tells me that the abrogation of the navigation laws would be of no use unless I also took away the timber duties. He tells us that British-built ships are at a disadvantage of about 50 per cent when compared with the shipping in Brazil and in other foreign ports; that the mere repeal of the navigation laws would be but giving an advantage to foreign ships in our ports against our own ships, and that the remedy for that would be to abolish the timber duties, and all other duties which press upon shipbuilding and upon the trade in shipping. That might be a very proper course to pursue with regard to the interests in question; but the consequences of following it up at present would be, that I should have to propose taxes and imposts of another kind to a considerable extent, to replace the revenues which would be lost upon timber. Instead, therefore, of proposing one measure for the immediate relief of the country, my hon. Friend wants me to propose three measures, each of which would certainly meet with the most strenuous opposition in this House, and neither of which would have any very great chance of success. I have great respect for the advice of my hon. Friend, but I cannot promise him that on this occasion I shall feel it incumbent on me to follow it.

Colonel CONOLLY said, that with every respect for the Chancellor of the Exchequer, he was bound to state that his representations with regard to the destitution of Ireland were, so far as many districts of that country were concerned, entirely destitute of foundation. A great proportion of the county which he represented was, at that moment, in a state of fearful destitution, with the wages paid to the people totally inadequate to provide them with a sufficient quantity of provisions with which to meet their immediate wants. Much had been done to relieve that destitution. He had sent to Sligo and to Liverpool for provisions. To Liverpool he had sent 3,000*l.* with which to purchase food for the starving people in the county of Donegal. He wished to say nothing discourteous of the Chancellor of the Exchequer; but he felt bound to say that the misrepresentations which had been made to him were not in accordance with the real state of the facts. A long line of coast, from the Bay of Donegal round to Derry, had been left in a state of awful destitution. They had heard much of mills and factories; but in that district there were neither mills nor factories, nor great nor small traders. It was evidence of gross ignorance on the part of the Commissary General, when he directed the people to go to them, to direct them thus to places and persons having no existence. And when provisions were brought into the country, they were sold to the people at three times their real value. The Government had, at this moment, thousands of tons of provisions at Sligo. They would not part with a pound of it for any consideration, and the people were obliged to go to the retailers for food. Under these circumstances, the seller might sell at any price he pleased. When the people went to the retailers, they were compelled to go away with only a part of what they expected to get for their money. But such was the destitution pressing upon them, that they were obliged to put up with every imposition, and take what they could get for their money. The principle of prudence had been carried so far, that the people were likely to starve before they could be admitted to the enjoyment of the provisions which had been reserved for them. If they were only to relieve, three months hence, those who were likely now to starve, they would certainly be carrying their precautionary policy to a ludicrous and extravagant extent. He would distinctly state that the officers of the Government had been all along endeavouring to make it appear that the existing destitution was not so great as it really was. It had greatly increased since its fatal commencement; and the present enormous price of provisions deprived many persons of the means of sustaining themselves, because they had three prices to pay for what they purchased instead of one. Many persons, who some months ago were in ordinary and comfortable circumstances, were now, from the outrageous rise in the price of food, rapidly sinking in condition; and yet the public officers had declared that no person who had even a cow, or other means of acquiring money, should receive any relief.

The CHANCELLOR OF THE EXCHEQUER observed, that the Government had established extensive depôts; that many of them had not opened until the month of December; but that they were then generally brought into operation. Some of them, however, had been open throughout the autumn. To these few words of explanation he must add, that the hon. and gallant Member had completely misrepresented his sentiments, in stating that he had denied the wide-spread nature of the distress in Ireland.

COLONEL CONOLLY admitted the existence of the depôts, but denied that any food had been distributed from them. He could assure the right hon. Gentleman that he would be sorry to call in question anything which he stated; but he must be allowed to observe that the officers acting under the Government in Ireland had generally shown a disposition to disregard the complaints of the country. Up to last Thursday no distribution of food had taken place from any of the depôts in the port of Sligo, or on any part of the coast of the district with which he was connected. There was a depôt on his own estate, and no provision had been distributed from that, although the ordinary prices were more than tripled.

The CHANCELLOR OF THE EXCHEQUER assured the hon. and gallant Member that the depôt in Sligo had been open from time to time throughout the autumn.

COLONEL CONOLLY said, that the right hon. Gentleman was misinformed. It was true that the depôt in Sligo had been opened, but it was only for the purpose of transferring some of its contents to another depôt; none had been given to the people. He could declare positively that up to Thursday last not a pound of Government corn had been tasted by any of his constituents.

MR. GRATTAN thought it most extraordinary that if the statements of the Chancellor of the Exchequer were correct, he had not brought them forward on the first night of the Session. If those statements should prove to be well founded, he would have an action against the hon. Member for Donegal, for upon the faith of representations which came from his county, he (the hon. Member) had last week been accessary to voting a sum of money. The Chancellor of the Exchequer's speech was totally at variance with all the information which had hitherto reached him from the district in question, and with a letter which a magistrate of the county had addressed to the Duke of Wellington. What was the use of establishing depôts if no food was issued from them? Why was not oatmeal sold from the depôts at 2*s*., when the retailers were selling it at 3*s*.? There was no wisdom in the system pursued in Ireland. The Chancellor of the Exchequer said that 3,700,000 quarters of grain had been brought into England up to the month of November. [The CHANCELLOR of the EXCHEQUER: I said the 31st of December.] Well, giving the Chancellor of the Exchequer the benefit of thirty-one days, he (Mr. Grattan) would ask how many lives had been sacrificed in that period owing to the non-distribution of food? He did not complain that the Government had not done what they wished, but he complained that they had not done what they ought. He complained that they had not followed the example of the King of the French. He bought corn and gave it to his people—our Government bought corn and put it in their depôts. The Chancellor of the Exchequer had stated that it was not until the Government officers had entered upon their duties, that the Irish gentlemen had commenced operations. He would beg leave to tell the right hon. Gentleman that before any commissary came into Ireland, the Irish gentlemen were actively employed in relieving the destitute. The officer that was sent to his part of the country was thoroughly ignorant of the country, and so supercilious in his manner that he was anything but agreeable to the gentlemen of the country. They granted the money asked, and having sent their corn to the Government to be ground, that corn was kept there four months before they could get a single pound of it delivered to the people. He trusted that, without any reference to party feeling, some good would be speedily done for Ireland.

MR. P. SCROPE said, he had brought some complaints against the Government for not adopting precautionary measures to prevent the misery which was about to arise from a deficiency of food in Ireland. It appeared to him strange, that if the precautionary measures spoken of by the Chancellor of the Exchequer had been generally adopted throughout Ireland, such an amount of destitution and death should have been heard of. From another side of the House it was stated the other night that the population of Skibbereen was decimated. It had been stated that many had perished from famine. If the precautions taken by the Government were so effectual, he could not for the life of him understand how so many deaths could have occurred. He had strong feelings on this subject—he could not understand how any country like this, with a Government possessing such enormous power, with all the resources of this vast empire at its command—considering all the agencies it would employ, the facilities of communication it possessed, and the means of transport at its disposal—he could not but wonder how such a country could allow numbers of individuals to perish from famine in any quarter of the empire. After having heard the Chancellor of the Exchequer, he (Mr. Scrope) could not but entertain the opinion that most of the evils had arisen from the faults of the Commissariat. The wages allowed by the Board of Works were insufficient to enable the people to purchase food. But the main evil consisted in the Government not having availed themselves of the organization of the poor law established in 1837, by which out-door relief might have been provided for the poor. The Government, however, had thought proper to give the poor law agency the go-by, and had endeavoured to improvise, on the spur of the moment, a system of Government agency aided by voluntary relief committees (provided with no compulsory powers), which had lamentably failed. The only remedy for present and preventive of future evils, was the extension of the poor-law system in Ireland.

MR. GRATTAN said, that he would make peace with the Chancellor of the Exchequer if he would send 100,000*l*. worth of corn to the south of Ireland.

MR. BRIGHT wished to put a question to the Chancellor of the Exchequer, namely, whether it was intended to suspend the navigation laws with respect to vessels carrying other cargoes than grain exclusively? His reason for asking the question was this—he understood that insurance-offices refused to insure ships laden entirely with grain. Ships frequently brought other articles of merchandise, say 500 bales of cotton, besides a large quantity of grain. If, therefore, the proposed suspension of the navigation laws should apply only to vessels laden altogether with grain, a great portion of the benefit which had been anticipated from the measure would never be realized.

The CHANCELLOR OF THE EXCHE-

QUER said, that under the proposed suspension of the law, grain might be imported into this country in the vessels of any country for home consumption. It would be perfectly immaterial what the vessels might carry in addition to grain. All corn that might come from anywhere, in any vessels, would enter free of duty; but if the vessels should bring other articles which were liable to duty, those articles would not be admitted free of duty.

MR. BRIGHT said, that the point to which he had called the right hon. Gentleman's attention was not a question of duty. He merely wished to know whether, under the circumstances he had stated, vessels would be admitted into port, and might discharge their cargoes. If a Dutch ship were to bring from the United States into the Mersey a cargo partly of cotton and partly of corn, would it be allowed to discharge the whole of its cargo ?

The CHANCELLOR OF THE EXCHEQUER: The vessel will be allowed to discharge all the corn it brings, which will be admitted free of duty; but the rest of the cargo will remain under the operation of the ordinary laws.

MR. ROEBUCK said, it was evident the Chancellor of the Exchequer did not understand the question. The question referred to the navigation laws, and not to the duty on corn. The navigation laws prevented the produce of a foreign country from being brought into England except in a ship which belonged to the country where the produce was grown. Suppose a Dutch bottom were to go to the United States, take in there a cargo partly of corn and partly of cotton, would she be permitted to come into the Mersey with her cargo and discharge it ?

The CHANCELLOR OF THE EXCHEQUER said, he had already answered the question. He could only repeat that the vessel would be allowed to land the corn duty free, but not the cotton.

MR. BRIGHT thought the Chancellor of the Exchequer could not have paid much attention to this part of the subject, or he would not have given such an answer. The opinion of persons well informed on the subject was, that such a suspension as that proposed would be of very little use, with regard to the United States especially. When they were about making a change of this kind, why did they not do it wholly and completely? When things were in such a state, when the Government had called on the Archbishop for a prayer to Heaven for plenty, when vast sums were being sent from the Treasury to Ireland, and a part of the nation was supported by voluntary contributions, Ministers would not be justified in the sight of the country—they could not be justified to themselves—unless they gave the freest possible entrance to the corn of all foreign countries.

The CHANCELLOR OF THE EXCHEQUER said, that the clause in the present Act merely followed the Act of 1817, which the right hon. Gentleman read, in which it was recited that corn should be allowed to be imported free of duty, no matter to what country the vessel belonged in which it was brought.

MR. BRIGHT asked why they should adhere to the Act of 1817 at all? The circumstances might not be the same, the pressure might be less or more; they would shut out a large quantity of produce if they kept to the restrictions of that Act.

MR. M. PHILIPS hoped the Chancellor of the Exchequer would reconsider the subject, as under existing circumstances the greatest possible difficulty might be experienced by vessels to meet with an entire cargo of corn in foreign parts to meet the present exigencies of the case; so that unless they legislated so as to make that point clear, so that there might be no misunderstanding on the subject, as regarded vessels coming in with corn, and that they were entitled to all that freedom which belonged to English vessels, the House would be dealing partially. He was not one of those who would stand up to impugn the conduct of the Government as to what they had done to meet the existing difficulties, not fully foreseen even by the country itself; for so late as the 1st of October of the last year the prices of grain did not indicate any change that would cause alarm to the public, wheat being at 18*s.* the bag, or three bushels (as we understood), an extremely low price. The Chancellor of the Exchequer stated that the export of grain from Ireland to this country was less this year than it had been for any other. He was glad, for the sake of Ireland, that such was the case, as he could not participate in those feelings entertained by some, that some of the grain of that country should be transmitted here; as the very fact of its coming here had the tendency to keep down prices. Notwithstanding the present state of Ireland, in consequence of the failure of the potato crop, yet it would be better to leave matters, in some measure, to their natural course; as too much legislation, even with the most benevolent intentions, might only aggravate the mischief. He was sure there was not one among them who did not sincerely sympathize with the afflictions now endured by the sister country—and although much had been said in Ireland as to the ill-feeling which England had manifested towards her, he hoped that what England was now about to do, prepared to do, and most willingly to do, would be such as not only to alter that unfavourable opinion, but to show that there were no grounds for it at all. It was to be hoped that England would now so relieve the distresses of Ireland as to draw closer those bonds which should ever closely unite the two countries; and not only so, but attention should be turned also to the future, so that, by sound legislation, they might prevent the continual recurrence of those evils which have ever placed that country in a situation to be regretted. It was not for him to offer any suggestions to the noble Lord at the head of the Government; but still he could not help observing that it would be most important that means should be devised to secure seed for the next season, and to that amount which the wants of the people would demand, so that seed should be secured in such a way as not too much to enhance the price of grain.

Lord J. RUSSELL: With respect to the point which has very naturally been raised by the hon. Member for Durham, there is certainly a difficulty. The Act previously passed must be looked on as a precedent, and every clause of it must be considered and not adopted without due deliberation. The Act of 1817 provides that corn should be introduced in any vessel of any country at a reduced duty, or free of duty. But it is now said to be desirable to give a greater latitude to that Act. But how is that object to be accomplished? The House would not, I presume, desire that, under the appearance of suspending the corn law, there should be an evasion of all navigation laws. Now suppose a vessel came in with a single quarter of corn, and all her other cargo of a different description of article, would not it be clear that the owners would merely seek their own advantage, and not a freer importation of corn, if they claimed to have their vessel excepted from the navigation laws? Again, suppose it was laid down that half or two-thirds of the cargo should be corn, how difficult it would be to say whether the conditions were fulfilled, and whether, if the rule laid down was violated, any corn brought by such a vessel should be admitted? I own these difficulties struck us very much, and we thought on the whole that it was better to follow the precedent which was before us, than propose a clause which would lead to the total abrogation of the navigation laws. If the hon. Member for Durham can suggest any practical solution of the difficulty, I shall be glad to consider his suggestion.

Mr. ROEBUCK: The noble Lord should bear in mind that it is high freights which prevent the freer importation of corn. What stands in the way of our bringing it in at a cheaper rate? The navigation laws. The bold, clear, common-sense way of effecting this object is by abolishing the navigation laws. Oh! but you say, "your object is to import corn, and some other article may be brought in in vessels nominally freighted with corn." The question is the lowering of freights; for that once effected, corn, like every other article, will come in more readily. Keep your eye on that single matter—that it is the lowering of freights you want to effect, without reference to what is brought in.

Mr. T. BARING thought that, if the navigation laws should be in every respect suspended, the proposal would be a very bold one, and would, in his opinion, meet with a strong opposition. Such a change would open our ports to every article of every country, no matter in what vessel it came. Thus American ships with tea cargoes would come into competition with teas imported by the traders of this country in British ships. It was true this might benefit the consumer, but it would interfere with the regular course of trade—with the very basis on which all transactions for the last year proceeded. The example of France should be kept in mind, which suspended the navigation laws as regarded corn only. He should vote for the proposed change, as showing a practical sympathy for Ireland at a great emergency, but he thought it would be all but inoperative, and that its advantages would hardly counterbalance the evil of unsettling things that were now settled. As regarded our great source of supply, the United States, it was well known that their ships, which now came in free, were, with our own, the great carriers of the world. He had not heard that ships of other countries had offered to bring corn at a lower rate than those of America and England, and therefore he feared that the abolition of the navigation laws would induce a much larger number of foreign ships to be employed in the trade between England and America than there were at present.

Mr. BRIGHT could assure the noble Lord he did not mean to attack the navigation laws by a side blow. His object was that corn should be brought in in as large quantities as possible. If they had an honest intention to get as much corn as possible, what great difficulty was there in saying that a ship bringing a certain quantity of cotton with it, according to certificate, should be allowed to discharge it? The hon. Member for Huntingdon—and he never felt more gratified that he was not Member for London than when he heard his predictions in that House on matters of commerce—had pronounced an opinion on the proposed change, which he thought ought to be received with some reservation. The hon. Gentleman was equally confident that a fixed duty of 10*s.* would be satisfactory when the change in the corn laws was proposed; and though the hon. Member was the representative of one of the largest mercantile firms in London, he begged to remind the House he was not any better authority as to the sort of cargoes like to be brought into our ports, or as to the cost at which they could be so introduced. He knew as a fact, that there were at that moment ships discharging cargoes of cotton and corn; but after the change in the law, such ships must go to some other country to land their cotton. He had been told by the Member for South Lancashire (who was more largely engaged in this trade than any other merchant) that it was quite common to charge an extra rate of insurance on vessels carrying corn alone.

Lord G. BENTINCK thought it required some degree of assurance in the hon. Member for Durham to charge his hon. Friend with ignorance of the question on which he spoke; the House would recollect that at every meeting of the Anti-Corn-Law League the hon. Member for Durham assured the people the effect of the repeal of the corn laws would be to give them a large loaf and cheap bread, and increase the export trade of the country. When they heard that in one county alone, in Lancashire, 500 mills were working short time, and that the exports of the country had fallen off 5,000,000*l.* sterling, in the face of a free trade in corn, he thought it did require considerable assurance in the hon. Gentleman to charge his hon. Friend, who knew more of mercantile affairs than any Gentleman in the House, with ignorance in the predictions he had made. With regard to the navigation laws, he was prepared to support the noble Lord, if the measure was restricted to the importation of grain alone; but if it should be attempted, under the pretence of importing grain, to get in the sharp end of the wedge, and abolish the navigation laws altogether, then he could not give him that support. That was a great political and national question, and though he had always predicted that free trade in one thing would be followed up by a demand for free trade in everything else; and though he had always expected and foretold, when the shipping interest joined the late Government, and the Anti-Corn-Law League, in forcing a free trade in corn, that their own turn would come next; yet he would not be tempted to avenge the cause of the agricultural interest by lending his aid to a repeal of the navigation laws. He did not forget that there was a time, before the navigation laws were enacted, when the Dutch had the whole carrying trade of the world; and by possessing that great mercantile marine, they were enabled to send Admiral Van Tromp, with a broom at his masthead, to sweep the Thames clear of British commerce. He should resist any attempt, under any pretence, to repeal the navigation laws, the object being to let the cotton of America be brought over in any ships that could bring it at the cheapest rate. He agreed with those who said, if these laws were to be suspended, that it would have been better had it been done some months ago. But as he could not admit, and did not credit, that up to the 3rd of August last there was one man in the country who in his heart believed such a calamity as the present was impending over them, he could not join in any strong censure of Her Majesty's Government for not having foreseen this famine. With respect to the suspension of the 4*s.* duty, he was prepared to withhold his opposition to Her Majesty's Ministers, and to give to that proposition his consent. He yet begged to be distinctly understood as protesting against the supposition that the consumer would get corn one farthing cheaper on that account; and therefore he did not censure the Government for having so long delayed the decision to adopt this measure of the suspension of the remaining duty; on the contrary, his regret was that they should have been led away by clamour, and forced by the pressure from without from their original intention to maintain that duty. He was not now viewing the question, either as an agriculturist or as a protectionist, but as a financier; he was convinced that the duty when remitted would not be saved to the consumer, but would go into the pockets of the importers, and that, consequently no reduction in the price of the article would follow upon the plan proposed. This being the case, he could not give his approval, though he gave his vote for the measure. He could not help auguring, from the silence of Her Majesty's Ministers on the subject of finance, that the pockets of the Chancellor of the Exchequer were not now so overcrowded with surplus revenue as to enable him to part, safely, with that portion of the revenue derived from the existing duties on corn. Let them look, in calculating the gain to the consumers, to what had happened yesterday in the city of London, on the announcement of its being the intention of the Government to repeal this duty. He held in his hand that day's corn circular of one of the most eminent corn factors in the city, Messrs. Usborne and Son, and the information it gave spoke volumes. It stated, that "the effect on that day's market was to depress barley and malt, in which scarcely a transaction had taken place;" that "bonded corn had advanced in value to an extent which would be equal to the reduction in the duty;" that "there had been a fair business in all kinds of corn, at full previous averages;" and that "floating cargoes of wheat near at hand rose 2*s.* to 3*s.* a quarter." Now, this was indisputable evidence that every fraction of the remitted duty would go into the coffers of those very corn-merchants and factors—those engrossers, and regraters, and forestallers, of whom they already had so much reason to complain. That would be the result; he did find fault with the Government that their sympathies seemed to have been too strongly developed in behalf of these corn merchants, and that at this moment, when, as he apprehended, the Chancellor of the Exchequer was in extreme need of a surplus revenue to meet the distress in Ireland, they were taking from him a great help, and, with no benefit to the objects of their legislation, putting still greater profits into the pockets of the dealers and speculators in corn. No one could be deceived in the result; no man, rich or poor, wearing a fustian jacket, working either in the fields or the streets, could doubt when he read the statement quoted, that the direct effect of the remission of duty would be to make an unnecessary present to the corn merchants of that revenue which otherwise would have been levied for national purposes. And assuming, as they might assume, that no less than 4,000,000 quarters of grain would be imported in the course of the next twelve months, the result would be a loss of 800,000*l.* to the revenue, and nothing whatever done to improve the position of the consumer. He was far from thinking that this desirable end, the benefiting the consumer, could not, by any other measure, have been attained. He, for one, held that, if the old corn laws had been maintained, the Government of this country would have now been in a condition of less difficulty. He did not refer merely to the increased revenue which they would have obtained, amounting to upwards of 1,300,000*l.*, instead of 650,000*l.*, which, as he understood, had been received since the 5th of July last; but he did most firmly believe that, had the old laws not been repealed, they would now have had in bond upwards of 3,000,000 quarters of corn. And this would have been a sufficient stock for the hour of need, and on this the Government might have laid their hands for the purpose of supplying food to the people of Ireland. The duty under the old *régime* had never been lower than 10*s.*, to which it had for the first time fallen that week: the Government might then have purchased that corn; they might have paid out of one pocket the 10*s.* duty, and rendered it back into the other; thus the country would have suffered no loss, while the effect of this enormous amount of grain in bond hanging over the market, manifest and patent to all the world as it would have been—as it had often been before when there was an immense store in bond—would have been to retain at a reasonable rate those prices by which the poor were now screwed down. He doubted not in the slightest degree that this would have happened, that if they had maintained the old laws, they would have been in a very superior position, and that then it would only have required the will of the Government to prevent the death by starvation of a single human being in Ireland. Therefore the loss by the change of the former law was the loss of 3,000,000 quarters, which would now have been at their disposal in bond; but while regretting this, he must allow that the present Government could not be charged with, and were not responsible for the misfortune. That for which, however, he did blame the Government even more than for determining to uphold the 4*s.* duty, was their neglect in not having stringently prohibited the export of grain from Ireland. How did that matter stand? They talked of the benefits which had been, and necessarily would be, derived from their free trade; and yet, by a paper before him, he found that whilst there had been imported only into Ireland between 400,000 and 500,000 quarters of foreign and British corn, full 1,700,000 quarters had been exported from Ireland, and that within the last eleven months.

The CHANCELLOR OF THE EXCHEQUER doubted whether this return contained the imports which had gone directly from foreign ports into Ireland without having touched the English markets.

LORD G. BENTINCK believed the return to be a complete and accurate return of all the imports of corn into Ireland, and certainly of the exports from Ireland to this country; and he thought that, on inquiry, his right hon. Friend would find the statement to be essentially correct. It would be seen, then, that there had been a balance, in the whole trade, of 1,300,000 quarters of corn exported from Ireland into England; and it could not be denied that, if this export had been prohibited, they would at once have saved a sufficient quantity to maintain 2,500,000 of the Irish people from this time until the next harvest. In this respect, therefore, Her Majesty's Government had made a great mistake. It had been said, indeed, that if all the countries in the world had had their granaries ransacked, the required supply could not have been obtained; but what had the President of the United States declared to Congress on the 8th of December last, in reply to this single assertion? The President, after having referred to the deplorable condition of the suffering people of Europe, and to the very opposite position of the farmers within the Union, had stated "that the home-market alone was inadequate to the consumption of the immense supplies of food, corn, and other articles which had been produced, even supposing them to be offered at the most reduced prices, for the simple reason that the number of home-consumers was too limited." "The United States," continued the President, "was enabled, so great was the over-stock, to supply, not alone the home-market, but the deficiencies of the harvests of the whole world." Then they had the official (American) statement of the crop of 1845, with the further statement, admitted by all, that the crop of 1846 was considerably in excess of that of 1845. According to the documents furnished by the Board of Trade at Washington—and he thought the statistics of the United States would be found to be quite as accurate as the statistics of Great Britain — no less than 796,600,000 bushels of corn of various descriptions were grown in the year 1845, being equal to about 97,000,000 quarters; and it was stated, upon the authority of the Government journal at Washington, "that this was a quantity exceeding, by *tens* of thousands of bushels, all that was required for the consumption of the United States." Under these circumstances, and with these facts before him, he, for one, could not think that there was any great danger of prices rising any higher than they were at present; and it would have been only necessary, in his opinion, for Government to furnish the different districts in Ireland with larger depôts of food to keep prices down in that country. He had received that day from a gentleman who had been travelling all over Ireland a letter, which informed him that even there the stacks in the stackyards of the farmers were more numerous than was usual at this period of the year; but that this tended little to vary the markets, inasmuch as the farmers, like others, were holding back in the expectation of a still further advance in prices. It was averred that there was scarcely a port in Ireland at which some one, two, or three corn merchants had not cleared 10,000*l.*, 20,000*l.*, or 50,000*l.* a-piece within the last three months, by holding corn and selling at the present enormous prices. Now, he thought the great error of Her Majesty's Government had been, in owning allegiance to these hard doctrines of political economy. He was even inclined to say that the policy pursued by the eastern despot had been on the whole more merciful than that adopted recently by the noble Lord (Lord J. Russell). All who had read eastern history would remember the story, and how that in the days of Nadir Shah, one of the wisest and most practical administrators of justice the world ever saw—albeit a tyrant, a great famine raged throughout Persia—

> "And the people cried and perished in the street, and it was told to the Shah that there was much corn in the stores of the rich merchants; but they refused to sell, for they said, 'The price will rise higher.' And Nadir answered and said, 'These men have done well to store up food to preserve the people, I will reward them; make proclamation 10,000 tomauns shall be given to the good man who has the greatest store of food. Many sent in their claims, but the prize was won by an Armenian; he had more corn than any other; and although people died daily in the streets, he had refused to sell, saying, 'Prices will

> yet rise higher.' 'Bring the money in gold from the treasury, and pay the Armenian,' said the Shah; and it was done. 'Sit down friend, and count it;' and the Armenian did so, and made answer, 'It is all right, O King!' But Nadir frowned, and, turning to the chief executioner, said, 'Lay hands upon him — take him forth—tie the 10,000 golden tomauns to his feet, and hang the rich merchant to the gate of the Ark of Teheran, that all men in Persia may see the Shah's justice on him who trafficks on 'the judgment of God.'"

And this was the course, in a milder form, which, had he (Lord G. Bentinck) been one of Her Majesty's Government, he would have adopted towards the forestallers and regrators, the political economists of Ireland, who had let the people starve that their profits might increase. He would have had recourse to a more lenient expedient, by forwarding large supplies to Ireland thus competing with those dealers in corn, and giving the starving people a chance of purchasing provisions at something nearer to a just price than at this moment, when they were paying 9*s.* a bushel for the corn which cost the importer only 4*s.* Had this course been taken, they would not now have had to lament the distress, and even the deaths, of so many thousands of Her Majesty's subjects in the sister kingdom; for they had suffered not so much from the absence of food in the country as from the want of means wherewith to purchase it, at the exorbitant prices demanded for it by the corn speculators. He was not about to offer any opposition to Ministers; but he could not have given his support to the measure without observing that in his opinion there would be no other result from the measure save this—the putting into the pockets of the corn merchants, and especially into the pockets of foreigners, to whom he still more grudged that advantage, the entire amount of the remitted duty—without declaring that he could not have supported the Government; and had he been in power, he, for one, would have maintained the duty, and, if required, would have applied the duty so obtained, amounting to 800,000*l.*, to the subsistence and relief of those for whose sake they were now suspending it.

Mr. W. BROWN would not have ventured, at that period, to address the House, did he not totally dissent from the inference, and deny the asserted facts, put forward by the noble Lord (Lord G. Bentinck). The noble Lord had been pleased to tell them an eastern story. He would meet it with another. It would be remembered that during the reign of the Emperor Julian, Antioch happened to be in the same position as, unfortunately, Ireland was this year, and that then the policy now recommended by the noble Lord was adopted by the emperor. Large contributions were levied from the public purse, private interests were interfered with, the Government became a dealer, and it was found that the Imperial Government had attempted much more than an emperor could possibly manage. Instead of making things better, the meddling made them much worse, the merchants finding that if they brought corn to feed the Antiochians, they could sell it only at the government price, which was much below the price in the surrounding country; and the consequence was, that they could not resist the profits to be made elsewhere. The farmers shunned the city for the same reason; the emperor kept to the price; and so the inhabitants were starved through his kindness. Such a summary mode of proceeding as that recommended by the noble Lord, would, he could assure him, never answer. There was another eastern story, quite as good as that of the noble Lord, and with a better moral: it was in reference to what had occurred in Bombay some years ago. There was there a stock of rice for fifteen months in store, when it was learned that Guzerat, a neighbouring province, was in a state of starvation. The Council at Bombay deliberated if they should take those steps now urged on the Ministry by the noble Lord—if they should keep all the corn at home, or open the markets and relieve the distresses of the starving Hindoos. After much consideration, the policy of the noble Lord was decided to be objectionable. They concurred that it was best for Bombay to have free trade, and to let the corn go wherever it was wanted, resting satisfied that they were, as was our island, in the highway of nations, that every ship sailing to India would look in to see if there was a good market at Bombay, and that, in this manner, they would not want a sufficient supply at all times. And, of course, it was soon known along the coast what was going on. Not a day passed without a ship dropping her anchor at Bombay, and, if the port was found full, they reserved their cargoes of grain for those who were in want. He thought that the Council at Bombay had acted much more wisely than the Persian Shah, and that it would be more advisable for the Government to imitate the policy of the former, rather than that of the latter, in regard to the Irish corn markets. An hon. Member had stated that one great cause of the difficulty of obtaining the necessary supply, was the impossibility of loading the large ships usually crossing the Atlantic with grain cargoes in the American grain ports, in consequence of their draught of water in those harbours and rivers being too great; but though this, in reference to some English, American, and continental merchantmen, might be quite true of the southern ports, yet those ships comprised a very small proportion of the marine engaged in the corn-carrying trade. In his opinion the Government had done all that it was possible for a Government to do in the present emergency; and he trusted that the measures they now brought forward would receive the ready sanction of the House. Some reflections had been cast on the dealers in grain, but he considered them a most useful class. It was only amid the ignorance and misconception of former times, that this class of men were called extortioners and so forth, and at present such charges could only be regarded as ridiculous. These men, with capital at their command, were able to buy grain in times of plenty, and, by storing it up, were able to supply the country when periods of scarcity came round, thus producing a most desirable effect upon the community; and every shilling of duty now taken off grain would enable them to send a greater number of vessels to America and Prussia, and the ports of other countries, and to pay, when found necessary, a higher price for the grain they purchased. The hon. Member concluded by referring to the advantages which a suspension of the navigation laws would confer upon the country, by facilitating the introduction of grain.

Sir C. NAPIER said, the noble Lord opposite had told the House that he foresaw, when the right hon. Baronet at the head of the late Government attacked the agricultural interest, that the shipping interest would soon be attacked. It was his opinion that protection had been the very bane of the shipping interest, and he should not regret to see the noble Lord's prediction realized. He felt perfectly satisfied that if the navigation laws were totally abolished, there would be much more exertion and enterprise on the part of our merchants than there was at the present moment. He would say further, that the seamen of this country would get more protection, be better paid, and better treated, as well as that we should build better ships than were now built and building, when it was known throughout the world that our navigation laws did not exist. Perhaps the noble Lord was not aware that there were, at the present moment, notwithstanding our navigation laws, from 50,000 to 60,000 British seamen employed on the coast of America and in American ships. If our navigation laws had acted in that manner, drawing away the best seamen from this country to America, he should be glad to know how it was possible for the noble Lord, or for any person connected with the commerce of this country, to support laws that had been of no benefit or use to us whatever. If they only looked at the vessels built now or some years ago in this country, which were hardly fit to be compared with the fine ships built in America or other countries, he would even say in Greece, he should like to know of what benefit the navigation laws were to this country and our merchants. There was a notion that if we opened the trade, we should put down our own seamen; but he thought there was so much exertion, energy, and intelligence among British merchants and seamen, that he had not the slightest fear that, if we destroyed the navigation laws, we should find any nation in the world, except America, able to contend with us. What had we done with respect to the Americans? We found the ships that used to trade to America far inferior to the American ships that traded to this country; but our merchants set all their energy to work, constructed some of the finest steam-boats in the world, and founded a trade between the two countries of which the Americans themselves had never thought. He was surprised that the noble Lord at the head of the Government, entertaining the opinion that it was proper to allow a perfectly free trade in corn, did not see the absolute necessity of suspending the navigation laws four months ago, by Order in Council. The noble Lord should have considered that ships were not to be found the moment they were wanted; even now it would take a long time to divert ships from other trades, and employ them in bringing food to this country. Odessa had been mentioned as a port from which it was probable that we should obtain a great quantity of corn. Any person well acquainted with navigation knew that ships going from this country, or even from some of the Mediterranean ports, to Odessa, might have to wait for months at the Dardanelles before they had an opportunity of proceeding to their destination for corn; but if the navigation laws had been suspended several months ago, we should by this time have had a large importation. The Mediterranean nations being mostly averse to trust themselves to carry corn from Odessa to this country, the trade was confined entirely to British vessels, and it was easy to see that there was not time to send ships to Odessa for a supply that would reach us when it was most needed. He hoped to see the noble Lord at last come forward with a Bill to abolish the navigation laws, and that they would never be re-established again. The right hon. Gentleman the Chancellor of the Exchequer had said, there would have been no use in suspending the navigation laws in October and November, for that then Odessa was shut up. But the right hon. Gentleman was mistaken; Odessa was not shut up in those months, but now in January, he believed, it would be shut up perhaps for months. The hon. Gentleman who had spoken with reference to America was perfectly correct; the rivers and canals were frozen, and corn could not arrive at New York for some time.

Mr. ROEBUCK, if ever he entertained any doubts as to the capacity of the noble Lord opposite (Lord G. Bentinck) to govern the country, felt that what had that afternoon taken place must have settled all his doubts, or the doubts of any other person, upon the subject. The noble Lord spoke of the assurance of the hon. Member for Durham in doubting the extent of the knowledge possessed by another hon. Member; and he then went on to state his own opinion as to what Her Majesty's Government should in present circumstances do. Now, just let the House mark the course pursued by the noble Lord: first, he said, he did not believe this measure would do the slightest good, but that on the contrary he believed it would be mischievous; that was his first proposition, "because," said he, "it will not lower the price of food to the people of Ireland, but put money into the hands of forestallers and regrators;" and then he went on to say that, were he in power, he would do in a milder form what he described Nadir Shah to have done. Nadir Shah hanged such people with 10,000 tomauns about their necks; but the noble Lord would do the thing in a milder form—perhaps send them to prison. But this was not all. The noble Lord said that the Bill of last year was a mischievous Bill, and for this reason—it raised the price of corn. [Lord G. Bentinck had not said so.] The noble Lord said, that if the corn law of last year had not passed, there would have been at this time so large a quantity of corn in this country that the price would be lowered to the consumer in Ireland. Then, what was that but saying that the present corn law had raised the price of grain? Why, the noble Lord denied the statement he (Mr. Roebuck) had first made, and now he acquiesced in it. Then if the corn law had raised the price of corn, how had it done so? He said, that but for that law they would now have had a large importation of grain in bond, and available for the use of the country. Now he held in his hand, in a return to the Government, a statement of the average prices regulating the duty on wheat, barley, and oats. This return extended from the 25th of June to the 14th of January, and he would read parts of it for the edification of the noble Lord, who had said that the law of last year enhanced the price of grain. In June the rates levied under the present duties were 4*s.* per quarter; under the old law they would have been 18*s.* In July, under the present law, they ran at 5*s.* and 6*s.*; under the old law they would have been 18*s.* and 19*s.* In August, under the present law, 7*s.*, 8*s.*, 9*s.*, and 10*s.*; under the old law 20*s.* In September, under the present law, 9*s.* and 10*s.*; under the old law 20*s.* In October, under the present law, the rates were 8*s.*, 7*s.*, 5*s.* and 4*s.*; under the old law, 20*s.*, 18*s.*, and 16*s.* In November, under the present law, 4*s.*; under the old law, 15*s.*, 13*s.*, and 12*s.* In December, under the present law, the duty was 4*s.*; under the old law it would have been 12*s.* Now, he wanted to know of the noble Lord, who presumed to take the position of the Chancellor of the Exchequer, and who came to the House of Commons with so much inflated phrase and gesticulation and extraordinary modulation of voice, and declared that he would have profited under a different law from that we now possessed, and grounded that declaration upon erroneous statements—he wanted to know how the noble Lord could reconcile that declaration with the facts he had now read? And, then, that any one should gravely propound the doctrine that he would punish a man for carrying on, according to the old English principle, the ordinary business of a merchant; that for carrying on his business in an honest trade he should be sent to prison, if not hanged! Why, he should like to know if we were to come to that state of things in this country? The course of the noble Lord put him in mind of the story of an old chess-player, who gained his game by being so long between his moves that his adversary always fell asleep, so that the latter, on awakening, moved in such desperation that he lost the game. Now he hoped, that the noble Lord would not imitate this sleeping chess-player. The noble Lord had recited an eastern story for the benefit of Ministers; and perhaps he (Mr. Roebuck) might also be permitted to refer to an oriental tale, which probably was familiar to the early recollections of many hon. Members. It told of a damsel who set her heart on some object of attraction which was placed at the top of a high mountain, and sent her brothers to a cave which contained the treasure. The moment they began to ascend this mountain, they were assailed by a torrent of abuse and vituperation from some unseen beings, and on attempting to redescend, they were turned into pillars of marble. The sister next made the attempt herself to ascend the mountain, and bethought herself of the expedient of stopping her ears with cotton; she did so, and succeeded. If the noble Lord at the head of the Government would pursue a steadfast course, unalarmed by vituperation and violence, not turning aside to the right hand or the left, but pursuing that steady and honest policy which the great exigencies and present interests of the country demanded, he would attain his end in safety, without being driven to that oriental despotism of hanging the unfortunate merchant who was successful amidst the miseries of his country.

MR. DISRAELI: I shall endeavour to imitate the speakers who have preceded me in one respect at least: it is neither my duty nor my desire to offer any obstacles to Her Majesty's Ministers. Gentlemen have risen from both sides of the House, some of them accounted very zealous supporters of the Government, who have addressed you with some criticism which, if it did not speak disapprobation, hinted dislike that the measures of the Government had not been matured at an earlier period. It is very possible, had these measures been adopted at an earlier period, that greater benefit might have accrued to the public; but the question which the House has to decide is, whether any body of men placed in the circumstances in which Her Majesty's Government were placed, could have acted on the whole with more prudence, with more discretion, and, I will add, with more enterprise. Her Majesty's Government succeeded to power under circumstances that were not anticipated; and I believe I may say, a very few months before that event, they did not in any way imagine that a combination of circumstances could have placed them in the position they now occupy. When I remember what happened on this side of the House when we were in opposition, when I remember that we were for more than ten years drilled on these benches, that not a phrase was uttered — far less a measure proposed — that was not weighed well beforehand, lest those who were to succeed to the then Government of this country should be committed—it would be, I will say, the basest hypocrisy in Members on this side now to rise, and when they see a body of Gentlemen called to the government of this country under circumstances like those before us—called to regulate fortunes so momentous, and in a conjuncture so difficult—to suppose that we are to bring to the consideration of their policy that pedantic and captious support which some have offered. I think, on the contrary, we ought to feel under great obligations to them for having accepted the reins of government under circumstances of this nature; and I think every man in this House is bound to give a consideration to their measures when they are proposed —I will not say the most indulgent, for that may be thought an offensive expression—but is bound to meet those measures in a spirit not only devoid of all party feeling, but with an anxiety to find in them some scheme that may really advance the public happiness of the United Kingdom. I think the two measures brought before us to-night have been proposed to us by the noble Lord in a tone so unexceptionable, so exemplary, have been conceived and expressed in a tone so becoming a statesman, that I, for one, would have been extremely glad, and I believe the public would have sympathized with that feeling, had this discussion been as brief as possible, and had not the Chancellor of the Exchequer, by the speech he made, led to a discussion which may induce the public out of doors to suppose the existence of any difference of opinion as to the measures this evening brought forward. It is well it should be thoroughly understood, that upon these measures there is no difference of opinion; that, decided as our principles may be on the navigation laws of England, unchanged as our principles may be as to the protection we think due to the industry of this country; still, in acceding to the proposition of Government, we have been actuated by a wish to give our support to measures framed to meet a remarkable exigency. We are desirous to support the Government in the measures they propose under these circumstances, and those who are out of doors should understand that their representatives have seen that the people are suffering, and that their only desire is to adopt such measures as may be believed the most remedial to the occasion. The speech of the right hon. Gentleman the Chancellor of the Exchequer has produced some discussion, and my noble Friend near me has very properly expressed his opinions on the subject brought under our notice. The hon. Member for Lancashire, who sits opposite to me, seems to have been offended by some of the opinions which my noble Friend has expressed with respect to the commercial transactions of this country. The hon. Gentleman has told us, that had the principle supported by my noble Friend been followed, Antioch probably might have starved; Bombay, too, possibly, instead of being well fed, might have suffered considerably; and these are the instances he brought forward to illustrate the course we ought to pursue respecting Ireland. The hon. Gentleman forgets that Antioch was not starved—that Bombay did not suffer—but I believe there is no doubt that Ireland is suffering, and almost in a state of starvation. The hon. Gentleman has performed his duty in advocating those principles of political economy which the school that sent him here naturally, to the last, will uphold; but he must understand—and I appeal to every Irish Member here, whatever be his creed or his race—that the great object of these discussions, as far as we can influence public opinion, is to give a heavy blow and great discouragement to those principles of political economy, the best part of which I willingly believe is, that they have contributed to send the hon. Gentleman among us. That is the question which, under one of its many multitudinous forms, is before us. It is a part of the great struggle between capital and labour; and we understand and accept it as such. The Members for Ireland, whosoever send them here, accept it as such, and the two nations will ultimately ratify our decision upon that subject. The hon. Member for South Lancashire seems annoyed that my noble Friend should have expressed a feeling adverse to forestallers and regraters, and talks of such a feeling being a feeling that existed in barbarous days. It is very true that it was 600 years ago that statutes against forestallers and regraters were passed. But what does that prove, when you hear expressions adverse to those classes at this moment, but that there is a strong national feeling opposed to that system? And I tell this to the hon. Gentleman, that all his philosophy will not be successful when opposed to the national conviction. I, for my part, am convinced that the hon. Gentleman himself is not a forestaller. I feel persuaded the hon. Gentleman is not a regrater. I am sure the hon. Gentleman is not a great capitalist who has invested his capital in corn. But I tell the hon. Gentleman this, if those sentiments had been expressed by one in such a situation, the speech would not have been forgotten by the people of England. And when the right hour arrives, he will find that his principles of political economy will be subjected to a kind of criticism he will not find within the walls of this House. Perhaps I ought not to sit down without also alluding to some expressions used by the hon. and learned Member for Bath, who has this Session appeared before the House in a new character. The hon. and learned Gentleman avows himself a critic; but if he is a critic, it appears to me that he is one who less resembles Aristarchus than Thersites. The hon. and learned Member for Bath, who spoke of the modulation of voice, and the gesticulation of another, and who exhibits to us on every occasion tones so measured both of mind and voice—the hon. and learned Member, so classic in all his conceptions, so happy in all his expressions, so temperate in all his views, so choice in all his phrases, whose criticism upon a Secretary of State is that he "writes a shocking style," and whose answer to the leader of an Opposition is that his voice does not accord with the musical gamut—this hon. and learned Gentleman, showing, as he has this Session, so feverish an impatience that he has lost no opportunity of giving expression to his opinions, as if he were labouring under the sense of some impending dissolution, and so was reluctant to relinquish any opening for astonishing the empire by the brilliancy of his sarcasm, and that great power of argumentation which even a Member for a University has at last vouched for—the hon. and learned Member has replied to the apologue introduced by my noble Friend by a quotation from the *Arabian Nights*—a quotation whether more apposite than the illustration employed by my noble Friend, I leave the House to determine. The point of my noble Friend's story may not, in the opinion of the hon. and learned Gentleman, have applied; but the House must have observed that the hon. and learned Gentleman gave no point at all to his "pillar of marble" with which he favoured us. Whether it was emblematic of the hon. and learned Gentleman's newposition as a "monarchical politician," I cannot take upon myself to decide. Perhaps the appearance of the hon. and learned Gentleman in this new phasis may raise the funds to-morrow. But what will they say to it at Bath? A great writer has told us that the corruption of a bad author makes a good critic. Whether this aphorism be applicable in politics as well as in literature, I will not inquire; but if the corruption of a bad poet do make a good critic, it is possible that a radical philosopher may turn into a monarchical politician. Sir, when the hon. and learned Gentleman rises with such facility, and lectures Ministers of State, and those who, as he voluntarily engages, shall be Ministers of State—when the hon. and learned Gentleman indulges in these free exhibitions of his critical powers, it would be well for him to remember that others may be criticized as well as those who are the subjects of his sarcasm; and when the modulation of the voice, the exquisite temperature of the character, the sweetness of the phrase, the softness of the manner, are admitted to be legitimate subjects for Parliamentary discussion, then the hon. and learned Gentleman opens a field of animadversion upon himself, which I, for one, have no wish to pursue, and which, for the sake of the decorum of our debates, I hope he will not in future prosecute.

MR. B. ESCOTT thought the reflections cast upon the noble Lord (Lord J. Russell) were unjust. If he had been in fault, it was in allowing too much interference with the food of the Irish. The noble Lord the Member for Lynn talked of the measure about to be taken as founded on a popular delusion, and said it would confer no benefit upon those whom it sought to benefit; and the hon. Member for Huntingdon (Mr. T. Baring) denied that the measure would produce any great effect, or benefit the consumer. That evening he had received a letter signed "Thomas Baring," requesting him to forward his subscription for the aid of the starving people of this country. What did the hon. Member for Huntingdon mean? He denied that the measure could benefit the consumer, and he sent a letter begging for aid to the consumer. And the noble Lord (Lord George Bentinck) said, that not only was this doctrine of trade wrong, but that the very measure he was going to vote for would not benefit the consumer at all. He blamed not the Government; he blamed the House for the delay complained of. The noble Lord the Member for Lynn would not say that last Session there was no apprehension of famine. The noble Lord (Lord J. Russell) he believed, said so, but the noble Lord was mistaken. It was last Session that he called for an extraordinary vote to save the people from starving; and when the noble Lord the Member for Lynn, and others, censured the Government for not earlier bringing forward the measure and opening the ports—[Lord G. BENTINCK dissented]—he begged pardon, the noble Lord did not say so; he said it was a foolish thing to do so now, and yet he was about to vote for it. But the hon. Member for Limerick said so. Was not that hon. Member a Member of the House last August? Why was not that hon. Member in his place to support that small band who had seen last Session that the famine was approaching, and were ready to agree to any measure to avert it? But of all those who had attacked the Government on this head, he (Mr. Escott) was most astonished at the right hon. Gentleman the late Chancellor of the Exchequer, the Member for the University of Cambridge, who had said that the ports ought to have been opened in August last. Why, in November, 1845, the noble Lord had been ready to open the ports, and had written a very memorable letter on that occasion. He (Mr. Escott) thought the noble Lord had misjudged his power at that juncture; for had he proposed such a measure he would have carried it. But there were others who then wanted to open the ports. The right hon. Baronet the Member for Tamworth would have opened the ports, and the noble Lord would have supported him. Why had it not been been done? The reason was, that there were only a few Members of the Cabinet ready to support the right hon. Baronet. Who had been his opponent? The right hon. Gentleman the Member for the University of Cambridge. He had been the opponent of both Governments in their attempts to give free trade in food. Such being the fact, it was rather too much, now that there was a pressure upon a Government the right hon. Gentleman did not choose to support, that he, who had been the serious practical impediment to the opening of the ports, should now accuse the Government of delay. It was said that the corn ought to be sent from this country to Ireland; but if there was one point more than another which he wished to impress upon the House, it was this—that too little had been said concerning the suffering of this part of the United Kingdom. Did not the noble Lord know that a forced importation of corn to Ireland must deprive this country of the quantity sent? The noble Lord utterly miscalculated the amount of food lost in this country by the destitution of the potato crop. He believed the food of three-fourths of the people of the western counties had been potatoes; and by such an extraordinary interference with trade as the noble Lord had proposed, he would himself become a forestaller, by buying up the food of the people in those counties to send to another place. The distress of the people here was great. There was not a parish in the west of England in which subscriptions were not collected to save the people from starving; and he appealed to the noble Lord, as he valued fair dealing, to consider whether it were just to accuse the Government, or those who supported them, of being the cause of the deaths of the people in Ireland, because they had refused in a time of great pressure to prohibit sending corn out of this country.

Lord GEORGE BENTINCK declared he had never charged Her Majesty's Government with being guilty of the deaths of the people in Ireland. He appealed to those who had heard him whether there had been any spirit of vituperation towards the Government in any part of his speech. It was very far from his intention if it were so. What he had said was that if he could have prevented the late Government from repealing the old corn law, there would have been in the summer, when wheat was at something like 45*s.* a quarter, an enormous quantity of wheat in bond waiting the reduction of the duty by the natural operation of the sliding-scale, and the opportunity would have been given to the Government of the day to lay their hands upon that large stock of foreign grain so remaining in bond; and then he had gone on to say that if that corn had been purchased and sent to Ireland, it would have prevented all the calamities which had occurred. As to charges against Her Majesty's Ministers, from first to last he had not made any. He had said that they had come into office very much by the means of his own Friends; without any solicitation on their part, and under circumstances of the greatest possible difficulty; and he had also observed, what he now again repeated, that so far was he from blaming them for not introducing the present measures at an earlier day, that he did not believe that either the one or the other of them would be of the least advantage now, or would have been so had they been earlier adopted. He had not cast the slightest censure on the Ministers; on the contrary, he had been most distinct in expressing it as his opinion that, up to the 3rd or 4th of August, that which caused alarm to the officers of the Government was, that the late Government would be overwhelmed, not by the necessity of providing for a famine, but by the unprecedentedly low prices which it was expected would prevail in the home market next harvest. So far were they from anticipating a famine, that their anxiety had been excited by the apprehension that they would not be able to get rid of the stores of meal and corn which they had on hand even at 10*l.* a ton. Under these circumstances, he had a right to say, that no honest or truth-loving man could pretend to assert that before the 5th of August the Ministers had the least cause of apprehension of any potato blight and consequent famine this year. He trusted he had acquitted himself of the charge of having said anything in vituperation of Her Majesty's Ministers, or of having charged them with being guilty in any way of the murder of the Irish people.

Lord J. RUSSELL: I acquit my noble Friend of any vituperation of the Government. I think his opinions were exceedingly erroneous, but I do not think he expressed them in a manner at which the Members of the Government could feel themselves offended. With respect to my noble Friend's opinion about what the conduct of the Government ought to have been, I think it extremely erroneous. I was almost tempted to take my noble Friend to task for proposing to us the example of Nadir Shah. Holding the position he does, and having many commercial men attached to his party, the allusion to the hanging by Nadir Shah was a piece of rashness I could not have anticipated from him. That was a sort of declamation which, when known to-morrow morning, might detach from his party some hundreds of commercial men. They would fear that if his noble Friend was in power, he might perhaps be influenced by the example of the Persian; and they might dread even the lightest form of punishment which his humanity might prescribe to them. I am the more surprised at my noble Friend's doctrine, because at a banquet recently given to the hon. Member for Sunderland, he panegyrised that hon. Member as one who had benefited the community by his mercantile speculations. I was happy to hear the hon. Gentleman the Member for South Lancashire (Mr. Brown), who gave an admirable reply to my noble Friend's observations. I must say, that I am very glad to find so much knowledge and good sense added to our store of information as the hon. Gentleman is likely to contribute. I feel it unnecessary to say more; and, finding the proposal of the Government well accepted, I venture to propose to the House that they should agree to the Resolutions; that the Chairman, when the discussion is over, should report to the House that the Bill should be brought in, ordered to be printed, and to-morrow go through all its stages.

MR. FINCH complained that the noble Lord (Lord J. Russell) had not correctly explained the speech of his noble Friend (Lord G. Bentinck), and said his noble Friend by no means meant to cast any imputation upon fair and just commercial enterprise. He was willing to encourage such profits as were advantageous, but not such as were detrimental to the public, which was just the difference between the regrater or forestaller and the hon. Member for Sunderland, of whom his noble Friend had spoken in terms of deserved eulogy.

Resolution agreed to. House resumed. Resolutions reported, and Bill ordered to be brought in.

House in Committee on the Navigation Laws.

Lord J. RUSSELL moved—

> "That the Chairman be directed to move the House, that leave be given to bring in a Bill to allow, for a time to be limited, the Importation of Corn from any Country in Foreign ships."

MR. HUME, in withdrawing his suggestion, and supporting the Resolution of the noble Lord, admitted that the noble Lord knew more of the temper of the House than he did, and that the noble Lord had proposed as much as he could safely carry through the House.

MR. BERNAL OSBORNE was anxious to vindicate the Irish Members in that House and the Irish proprietors out of doors from the imputation of not attending to their duty, which had been cast upon them by the Chancellor of the Exchequer. The right hon. Gentleman had thought fit to convey an inuendo that the gentlemen of Ireland would not do their duty; but he spoke in ignorance of the facts. The Chancellor of the Exchequer appeared to be unaware of this fact, that the gentlemen of Ireland were reducing their establishments universally throughout the country, and were to a very great extent, and in some cases altogether, supporting at their own charge the poor of their respective districts. With respect to this now late measure (for so he would call it) of opening the ports, he had on a former occasion expressed it as his opinion that the noble Lord at the head of the Government had not done his duty in not having taken the step as long ago as the month of November last. It would have been a much wiser proceeding, and one more worthy of a provident Ministry, to have opened the ports at that time, when the proceeding might really have been attended with beneficial results, than to have come forward at this hour of the day, for the purpose of exhibiting sympathy for the Irish people by doing that which, as matters now stood, was declared to be nothing better than a mockery and delusion. Few knew the real state of Ireland. The fact was, the people were dying by thousands, and crime and death were every hour increasing. He knew a district which, though in the county of Tipperary, was one tranquil and well conducted, but in which scenes were now enacted which rivalled the Jacquerie risings in France. A letter from Dr. Jacob stated that under the horrors of starvation not only were the bodies, but even the minds, of the people becoming every day ineffective. He narrated a horrible story how, a few days since, near his own gate, two women had been roasted, and a man beaten almost to death for two shillings. And these things were done by wretched beings hunting for food. And yet the Ministers for a long time folded their arms listlessly, and did not take the proper measures for giving relief at the proper season. Very possibly they were deterred from doing so —as was insinuated by their daily organ a few mornings since—by a fear of the agriculturists and the shipowners. He did not wish to insinuate anything unworthy against the Government; but the fact was, people here in England would never credit what was passing every hour in Ireland until they saw the evidences of it at their own door. The charges of the hon. and learned Member for Bath he threw back, not with contempt, for it was impossible to feel contempt for so amiable and good-natured a Gentleman, but certainly with feelings of the strongest reprobation; for, bearing in mind the scenes which he had witnessed in Ireland—the wild frenzy of men driven mad by hunger, and the exposure of dead children upon the table of the board-room in the poorhouse of the union where he officiated as a guardian—he found it impossible to restrain his feelings, or to speak in language of calmness and moderation. The Irish proprietors, take them for all and all, were doing their duty nobly. They were laying down every superfluity—they were surrendering every luxury. To be sure, it was nothing more than their duty; but it was even meritorious to do one's duty; and they should not be compelled to endure the philosophical smiles of people who had not these calamities under their own eyes, and who themselves suffered nothing. He warned the Government not to carry their fallacies of political economy too far; for if they did, they would be awakened from their dreams by a revolution to which he could see no end. Talk of Antioch and Bombay indeed! What similarity was there between them and Ireland? In Ireland there was no trade whatever. There were no merchants there. In the great inland town of Clonmel, there was only one merchant to retail the Indian corn. That corn, he (Mr. B. Osborne) had bought for 8*l.* 10*s.* the ton last year, whereas he was obliged to pay 19*l.* 10*s.* the ton this year. This rise he attributed to the erroneous representations which were made and the false hopes which were held out by the Chancellor of the Exchequer, who in his Treasury Minute of the 22nd of August promised that meal should be procurable for a penny a pound. He had not the minute about him, though he usually carried it as a memento of the Government's infatuated policy; but he well remembered the erroneous representations and the false expectations which it held forth. In conclusion, he had only to remark that it ill became the hon. Member for Bath, or any other hon. Member who was utterly ignorant of the real condition of things in Ireland, to cast censure on the men who were sacrificing their property, and would willingly sacrifice their lives, to mitigate the horrors of the calamity by which that country was now afflicted.

The CHANCELLOR OF THE EXCHEQUER explained that he had never promised that meal should always be procurable for a penny a pound. What he said was, that meal at the period in question was actually procurable for a penny a pound; but he had never held out any promise that for the future it was at all times to be had at that price.

MR. B. OSBORNE still adhered to his original statement. The right hon. Gentleman had expressly held it out as a reason for not interfering with the trader, that meal would always be sold for a penny a pound.

Resolution agreed to.

The House resumed.

Report received forthwith, and Bill ordered to be brought in. Both Bills were brought in and read a first time, and ordered to be read a second time on the next day.

IMPROVEMENT OF THE STATE OF TOWNS.

MR. AGLIONBY begged to ask a question of the right hon. Baronet the Secretary of State for the Home Department respecting some Bills, which he understood last Session would be prepared during the recess. It was of consequence to parties in the country to know if it was the intention of Her Majesty's Government, early in this Session, to introduce a Bill having for its object the amending and consolidating certain provisions and Acts for improving the condition of the state of towns; for instance, the police, the lighting, and watching, which very often were the subjects of private Bills. His reason for asking the question was, that he understood that a public measure was to be brought in by the Government which would supersede the necessity of bringing in private Bills; and, therefore, parties intending to bring in private Bills would be induced to abandon them if a public Bill were brought forward by the Government.

SIR GEORGE GREY said, that in accordance with a pledge which he had made at the close of the last Session of Parliament, he had given directions for the preparation of Bills, which were in a very forward state; and he hoped, that in the course of ten days—about the end of the month—they would be ready to lay before the House.

House adjourned at a quarter past Ten o'clock.

HOUSE OF COMMONS,

Friday, January 22, 1847.

MINUTES.] NEW WRIT.—For Chester, *v.* Lord Robert Grosvenor, Chiltern Hundreds.

NEW MEMBER SWORN.—Hon. Cecil Lawless, for Clonmel.

PUBLIC BILLS.—2° Corn Importation; Navigation.

Reported.—Corn Importation; Navigation.

3° and passed.—Corn Importation; Navigation.

PETITIONS PRESENTED. From Burnley, and Habergham-Eaves, for Limiting the Hours of Labour in Factories.—From Newcastle-upon-Tyne, and Fowey, for carrying into effect the Recommendations of the Select Committee relative to Lighthouses.—From Liverpool, and Members of the Relief Committee of the Queen's County, for Allowing the use of Sugar and Molasses in Breweries and Distilleries.—From Colonists and Farmers of New South Wales, for Admitting Grain the Produce of Australia into the United Kingdom on the same Terms as Corn and Flour the produce of Canada.—From Deal, for Amendment of the Law relative to Promiscuous Intercourse.—From Clonmel, for placing Irish Lunatic Asylums on the same footing with those of Great Britain.—From Mohill, for Amendment of the Irish Poor Law.

ADDRESS TO THE QUEEN.

LORD MARCUS HILL appeared at the bar, and said he had to inform the House, that in obedience to its commands he had the honour to present to Her Majesty the Address voted on the 19th instant, to which Her Majesty had returned the following most Gracious Answer:—

> "I receive with great satisfaction your loyal and dutiful Address.
>
> "I look with entire confidence for your aiding My endeavours to preserve the blessings of Peace abroad, and to promote at home the general welfare and happiness of My People.
>
> "And I feel assured that no exertions will be wanting on your part to meet My anxious wishes for the relief of My suffering Subjects in Ireland and parts of Scotland."

To be entered on the Journals.

POOR LAW COMMISSIONERS.

MR. HUME, seeing the right hon. Home Secretary in his place, would now put to him the question of which he (Mr. Hume) had given notice. It was only necessary for him to state, that at the end of the last Session, on the 25th of August, he (Mr. Hume) placed on the Table of the House certain resolutions, arising out of the examination before the Select Committee on District Asylums; and in those resolutions he asked the House to take certain measures relative to the Poor Law Commissioners, as he believed their continuance in office would be detrimental to the interests of the country. He was then requested by the right hon. Baronet, on the ground that he (Sir G. Grey) had not had time to read the voluminous documents placed before him, to postpone the resolutions until he had had an opportunity of perusing them. The right hon. Gentleman had had that opportunity; and he now wished to ask the right hon. Baronet whether it was the intention of Her Majesty's Government to take any measures respecting the Poor Law Commissioners. He (Mr. Hume) had added to the question of which he originally gave notice, a reference to the report and evidence taken before the Andover Union Committee; and he might also observe that some additional information, bearing upon the same subject, had since been obtained by the House of Lords. Upon the answer he should receive to-night would depend the course of his conduct.

SIR G. GREY said, that the subject had undergone the consideration he promised; but the hon. Member and the House must excuse him if he did not answer the question, particularly as regarded the report on the Andover union, until the statement his noble Friend (Lord J. Russell) was about to make this evening, on the law of settlement, had been heard. No resolution had been reported by the Committee on District Asylums, but the evidence taken before it had been duly considered. Since the appointment of the Committee, the Poor Law Commissioners had exercised no power, but they had previously appointed boards of management in different districts of London: however, in only one district, the eastern, had the power been acted upon; and in the others no further step had been taken, though compulsory measures were in contemplation.

ST. ASAPH AND BANGOR.

MR. J. COLLETT referred to the following question which he had caused to be printed in the Votes:—

> "To ask the First Lord of the Treasury, whether it be the intention of Her Majesty's Government to create an extra bishopric by the appointment of a Bishop of Manchester, the sees of St. Asaph and Bangor not having become united at the death of the late Bishop of St. Asaph, pursuant to the Act 6 and 7 William IV., c. 77?"

The hon. Member observed, that during the recess the Bishop of St. Asaph had died, but that nevertheless the two sees of St. Asaph and Bangor had not been united. He understood that the Bishop of Bangor had refused to accept the see of St. Asaph, and there was a very general apprehension, in which he fully participated, that there was to be another bishop. He wished, therefore, to know whether there was any intention to create an extra bishop?

Lord J. RUSSELL said, the House would recollect that when the noble Lord the Member for Shropshire asked him last Session what course the Government intended to take with respect to a Bill sent down from the House of Lords, maintaining the two sees of Bangor and St. Asaph, and likewise proposing the creation of a Bishop of Manchester, he stated that he thought the subject required further and more extensive consideration, and that he was not prepared to give his assent to that Bill. The noble Lord, upon that assurance, withdrew the Bill, and did not press its further consideration. The subject had received the attention of Her Majesty's Ministers during the recess; and he (Lord J. Russell) trusted to be able, in the course of next week, to state the course which they proposed to pursue. With regard to the statement made by the hon. Member for Athlone (Mr. Collett), in the course of his question, that there had been some private understanding with the Bishop of Bangor which had led to the appointment of the present Bishop of St. Asaph, he could only state, that, according to the Act of Parliament, as he read it, and upon which he had obtained the opinion of the law officers of the Crown, the Bishop of Bangor could not be obliged to take the charge of the two sees, if he was unwilling to do so. The Bishop of Bangor had, he believed, previously to the vacancy of the see of St. Asaph, intimated that he would not take charge of the two sees; and when he applied to the right rev. Prelate on the subject, the Bishop of Bangor stated formally that he would not take charge of the two sees of St. Asaph and Bangor; and it therefore became his duty to recommend the Crown to fill up the vacant bishopric.

THE HILL COOLIES.

Mr. G. W. HOPE said, that during the period his noble Friend (Lord Stanley) was in the Colonial Office, he instituted a system under which natives of India were permitted to emigrate to the Mauritius, the expense of their passage being paid by that colony; and it was provided that at the expiration of five years they should be entitled to a return passage free; and that in the meantime they might employ themselves as they thought proper. It was also provided, that if they wished to return to India before the expiration of the five years, they might do so at their own expense. In the course of the recess, about the month of December, a statement appeared in one of the newspapers—he believed in *The Times*—purporting to be an abstract of and an extract from a despatch which was represented to be then on its way from the Colonial Secretary to the Governor of the Mauritius. The purport of that despatch was this—that instead of being permitted, as was the case under Lord Stanley's regulations, to employ themselves as they thought proper, they were to be subjected to certain fines, and, in default, to imprisonment, if they were not engaged in industrial residence; and, what was more important still, that they should not be permitted to return to India before the expiration of five years without obtaining a passport, for which they were to be charged at the rate of 1*l.* for each unexpired year of the term of five years. The consequence would be, that any one of these persons wishing to return to India at the end of the first year of his residence in the Mauritius, would not be permitted to do so without paying 4*l.*; and he would also be liable to defray the expenses of his passage himself. He (Mr. Hope) wished to know whether the abstract of the despatch, as it appeared in the paper, was correct; if it was correct, whether this regulation and tax had been imposed in accordance with that despatch; and, if the tax had been imposed, whether the natives of India introduced into the colony under Lord Stanley's regulation, and before the imposition of such tax, were to be liable to its payment?

Mr. HAWES, after thanking the hon. Gentleman for giving him notice of these questions, observed, that with reference to the first question, as to the correctness of the abstract which appeared in the newspaper, it was, to the best of his (Mr. Hawes's) recollection, perfectly accurate; but the best answer he could give to the hon. Gentleman was, that in the course of a very few days he (Mr. Hawes) would lay upon the Table his noble Friend's (Earl Grey's) despatches, which would afford all the information that could be desired on the subject. He (Mr. Hawes) wished, however, to take this opportunity of correcting the hon. Gentleman opposite on one point. No ordinance had been passed on the subject to which he referred; merely the heads of an ordinance had been transmitted to the Governor of the Mauritius.

No tax, therefore, was now imposed, and no regulation of the kind to which the hon. Gentleman had alluded was in operation. As, in a very few days, the hon. Gentleman would be in possession of all the information he could gain from the despatches, it was unnecessary for him (Mr. Hawes), on the present occasion, to enter further into the question.

Mr. HOPE had omitted to ask whether, previously to sending out the despatch—which he (Mr. Hope) did not mean to describe as an ordinance, but merely the orders to pass an ordinance—the concurrence of the Indian Government had been obtained?

Mr. HAWES replied, that the concurrence of the Indian Government was not obtained, and he thought he was bound to say that the Indian Government dissented from certain portions of the despatch—not entirely from the whole scheme, but from a portion of it.

Sir J. W. HOGG said, that, as far as the East Indian authorities were concerned, they were perfectly satisfied with the tone and spirit of the despatch sent out by the noble Lord. The despatch was not an ordinance, nor the heads of an ordinance; it only contained instructions to be acted upon and suggestions to be considered by the Mauritius Government, who were to report their opinions; and the Colonial Secretary gave specific orders that these suggestions were not to be carried into execution till the ordinance, whatever it might be, was first sent home for consideration. Nothing could be more fair than the spirit in which the instructions were sent out, although some of them might be such as the East Indian authorities could not agree to.

CORN IMPORTATION BILL.

Lord J. RUSSELL moved the Second Reading of this Bill.

Mr. MITCHELL inquired whether it were intended that the suspension of the navigation laws should only last till the 1st of September; and that no foreign ships with grain arriving here after that period would be admitted into the ports of this country? If that were the case, he had no hesitation in saying that the Government would shut out a very large quantity of corn indeed. The noble Lord had alluded the other night to considerable quantities of grain which might be expected from the Black Sea; but it should be recollected that some of the ports there were not opened until March or May, and no person would venture to ship grain with a chance of its not getting to this country in time to be admitted. His own impression of the state of the corn trade was such as to satisfy him that the noble Lord, before the conclusion of the Session, would have to propose the suspension, not only of the navigation laws, but of every description of restrictive laws. He was convinced that they were likely to see a high price of corn, not only for the next six or twelve months, but for the next two years. He would suggest, therefore, that the period of the suspension of the navigation laws should be extended or left indefinite; or, if the Government were not prepared to do that, some clause might be inserted in the Bill, leaving it discretionary with the Lords of the Privy Council or the Board of Customs to admit any ship with grain arriving here after the 1st of September, provided it was proved that she sailed from the port of loading on or before a certain day, which might be certified by the Consul there.

Mr. STAFFORD O'BRIEN wished to know whether, if it was the intention of the Government to suspend the payment of all the duty on corn till the 1st of September, any steps would be taken to ascertain for statistical purposes the quantity of corn imported?

The CHANCELLOR of the EXCHEQUER replied, that it was intended to suspend the payment of all duty whatever, because, in a case like the present, if anything were done, everything should be done. But, as the corn imported must be entered, there would be means of knowing the quantity brought in for consumption. With reference to the observations which had fallen from the hon. Member (Mr. Mitchell), he had to say that it was intended that foreign ships with grain must enter before the 1st of September; and the object of taking that period was to allow time for the transport here of all the corn which would probably be brought to this country of the late harvest, and not to make provision for the corn of the next harvest. He believed that the period chosen would be found to answer that purpose; but of course, if the state of circumstances towards the end of the Session should turn out as the hon. Gentleman anticipated, the Government would have the opportunity of coming to Parliament for such measures as might be deemed necessary to meet the then exigency. But at the present time, and with the present prospect, he believed that the Bill, as it stood, would effect all that was necessary for allowing the importation of all the corn that was likely to be brought here. The provision had not been drawn up without inquiry. From Odessa the voyage occupied two months, or eight weeks, so that a vessel sailing from there on any day before the 1st of July would be able to enter her cargo of grain in this country before the 1st of September. The navigation of the Black Sea opened at a much earlier period than July—by the end of March, for instance—and from a circular of a merchant at Galatz he learned that, in consequence of the extraordinary prices which prevailed for grain, the probability was, that every effort would be made this year to get the cargoes out of port at an earlier period than usual; and it was anticipated that considerable quantities of grain would be brought down ready for export by the months of May and June. This would allow sufficient time for its import into this country before September.

Bill read a second time; and, the Standing Orders being suspended, it passed through its other stages up to the third reading, which was carried at a subsequent period of the night.

THE NAVIGATION BILL.

Lord J. RUSSELL moved the Order of the Day for the Second Reading of the Navigation Bill.

Bill read a second time, and committed.

On First Clause being put, viz.—

> "That after the passing of the Act, and before , it shall be lawful to import into the United Kingdom, for home use, from any Country, in any ship or vessel of any Country, however navigated, any Corn, Maize, Grain, Flour, Meal, Rice, or Potatoes, the growth and produce of any Country, anything in the Law of Navigation to the contrary in anywise notwithstanding;"

Mr. MITCHELL moved as an Amendment—

> "After 'and,' to insert the words, 'provided such vessel shall be proved to have sailed from the port of lading on or before .'"

Lord J. RUSSELL said, that he could not agree to the Amendment, as in fact the object was to cause the arrival of vessels as soon as possible with corn, and not the arrival of vessels with similar cargoes at a late period of the year. He could not therefore agree to the adoption of a later day than that named in the Bill.

Dr. BOWRING was of opinion that the Amendment might be adopted with great advantage to the country. There was considerable difficulty in getting a sufficient number of vessels to carry corn from Taganrog, Odessa, and the ports at the other side of the Atlantic, and every facility ought to be afforded to those who were inclined to bring cargoes of corn from those ports of the Black Sea and the Atlantic.

The CHANCELLOR of the EXCHEQUER said, that the question before them was not a question relating generally to the navigation laws. The truth was, that it had been a question whether an earlier day ought not to be named, as the great object was to obtain a supply of corn at the earliest possible period. He had consulted an individual who was well calculated to form a correct opinion on the subject, and the result of that inquiry was, that the 1st of September would be the best day to name. What they wanted now was, to give a bonus for the importation of corn at the earliest possible period. If any further step were necessary in order to facilitate the importation of corn, Parliament could adopt it before the end of the Session.

Sir C. NAPIER said, that the Amendment was worthy of the consideration of the Committee. Suppose, for example, that a vessel left Odessa with corn on the 1st of July, allowing two months for the voyage, and that she was met by a westerly wind at Gibraltar, which detained her for several days, what was to be done with respect to her cargo if she did not arrive before the 1st of September?

Sir W. CLAY thought that they ought to guard against the chances of accidental delays, such as bad weather or similar causes. In ordinary times it would take two months for the voyage from Odessa to London, but delays might occur from many causes. The harvest of Southern Russia might not be brought down to the shipping ports of the Black Sea in sufficient time, and therefore they ought to adopt such means as would obviate any inconvenience which might arise from those delays.

Sir H. DOUGLAS expressed his intention of supporting the proposition of the Government for the suspension of the navigation laws for a specific period; but he would strenuously resist any attempt to use this temporary suspension as a wedge hereafter for the entire removal of the navigation laws. He agreed in opinion with those who thought that the navigation laws were amongst the wisest of the laws of England.

Mr. BROWN said, that if a ship left the port of lading under circumstances which presented a fair probability that she would arrive in England or Ireland before the 1st of September, she might encounter adverse winds or boisterous weather, and her arrival might thus be delayed beyond the appointed time. In that case the merchant who imported the corn, and the public might suffer a very great loss by the non-admission of the vessel under the present Bill; but nothing would be left contingent if the Government would name a day of departure of the vessel instead of a day of arrival.

Mr. F. T. BARING remarked, that in all such cases the Treasury could exercise their discretion as to the admission of the ship; and if it appeared that a vessel with corn had *boná fide* left the port of shipment at such a time as would justify the probability that she could reach the port of discharge before the 1st of September, he apprehended that the discretion would be exercised in favour of the admission of the ship.

Mr. LIDDELL would support the proposition of the Government, as he thought that they had taken a course which was calculated to meet the present emergency. He looked at the proposition on its own merits alone, but he would guard himself against being supposed to take a course which would allow this suspension to be used as a wedge for the removal of the navigation laws at a future period. The navigation laws were looked upon by shipowners as the bulwark of our commercial marine, and he could not consent to any proposition for their entire removal at a future period.

Sir H. DOUGLAS disavowed the intention of applying to Her Majesty's Government the design to use the present suspension of the navigation laws as a wedge for their future removal. He had too much faith in the integrity and good intentions of the Government to impute any such intention to them.

Mr. T. DUNCOMBE said, that as far as he could learn from what had been said, the Bill could not be carried into due effect unless they adopted the Amendment. It was true that the Chancellor of the Exchequer had told them that the time allowed by the Bill was rather too long, than too short, as he had consulted an individual who had told him that the 1st of September was the proper day to fix for the termination of the suspension. He had heard the hon. and gallant Commodore opposite, he had heard the Member for South Lancashire, and the Member for Bridport, express their opinions with respect to the expediency of agreeing to the Amendment; and he would ask the House if they would in preference to these opinions adopt the opinion of an individual who had been cramming the Chancellor of the Exchequer on this subject? Was this the same individual who told the Government that corn would go down in November? Corn had risen to 80*s.* in defiance of the anticipations of that individual who had undertaken to advise Her Majesty's Ministers.

Lord JOHN RUSSELL remarked that, with respect to what had been stated by the hon. Member for Portsmouth, he had no hesitation in saying, that in case of a vessel arriving under the circumstances described by the hon. Member, the Treasury would do as they had done in former instances; and if it were clearly shown that the ship departed from the port in proper time to render it probable that she would arrive before the 1st of September, that they would use that discretion which they possessed, in the same manner as they had done on former occasions. Beyond that intimation he could give no further pledge.

Lord GEORGE BENTINCK had no objection to support the proposition of his noble Friend (Lord John Russell), and he would add, that he thought it of very little matter whether the navigation laws were suspended for one period in preference to another, so far as regarded the supply of corn to this country. He was of opinion, that there was an erroneous impression abroad as to the effect which had been produced by the navigation laws, and the 4*s.* duty, in giving an advantage to France over this country; for in looking to the exportations of grain from Boston, New Orleans, and New York, from the 4th of September to the 26th of December, he found that there were 65,000 quarters of grain exported to France in that period; whilst the exports to Great Britain and Ireland in the same period were 526,000 quarters. When he saw that, he could not agree in the opinion that Her Majesty's Government had committed any great crime against Ireland in not having suspended the navigation laws and the corn importation laws at an earlier period. He thought, for his part, that the navigation laws and the corn importation laws had little to do with the circumstances which had been complained of. With regard to corn from Odessa, he perceived that the ablest organ of the political economists, the *Economist* newspaper, stated that great advantages had been gained by France in consequence of the suspension of the navigation laws by that country, and added that fifteen foreign vessels, principally Neapolitan and Greek, had arrived with corn at Marseilles within a few days, owing to that suspension. He was of opinion, however, that if the names afforded any indication, the *Economist* must have been mistaken as to the nationality of those vessels, for he saw amongst them the names *Vanguard, Calliope, Maria Theresa, Firefly, Malta,* and *Dicky Sam;* and he thought, so far as the navigation laws were concerned, those vessels which he had named, might as well have come to England as to have gone to France. If he might take the liberty of throwing out a suggestion to his noble Friend, it would be, that the Government should put the British vessels in the same position as that which foreign vessels would be permitted to occupy under the operations of this measure for the suspension of the navigation laws. A British ship was obliged by law to have three-fourths of her crew British sailors; and British ships were also obliged to carry apprentices, both of which regulations would, in case the navigation laws were suspended, operate against the British ship to the advantage of the foreign vessel. He would suggest, that in case of a suspension of the navigation laws, the British ships should be put upon an equality with the ships of other countries.

Mr. DUNCAN said, that although he should not oppose the proposition of the Government, he thought all difficulty would be obviated by fixing the time when a vessel took her cargo on board.

Mr. MOFFATT expressed himself favourable to the Amendment.

Mr. MITCHELL observed, that no satisfactory reason had been assigned for limiting the entry of cargoes to the 1st of September, or for compelling parties in the case of late arrivals to go begging for favours to the Treasury.

Mr. BROTHERTON stated, that a disposition was shown to acquiesce in the proposal to bring vessels leaving the port of shipment before the 1st of August under the operation of the present measure. It was the suggestion to substitute the 1st of September which had raised a discussion.

The Committee divided on the Question, that the words proposed by Mr. Mitchell be inserted:—Ayes 50; Noes 188: Majority 138.

List of the Noes.

Ainsworth, P.
Baine, W.
Bernal, R.
Bowring, Dr.
Bright, J.
Brotherton, J.
Brown, W.
Chapman, B.
Christie, W. D.
Clay, Sir W.
Colebrooke, Sir T. E.
Collett, W. R.
Collett, J.
Crawford, W. S.
Dennistoun, J.
Duncan, G.
Escott, B.
Evans, Sir De L.
Ewart, W.
Fielden, J.
Forster, M.
Granger, T. C.
Hall, Sir B.
Hastie, A.
Hindley, C.
Hume, J.
Humphery, Ald.
James, Sir W. C.
Kelly, J.
M'Carthy, A.
Milton, Visct.
Moffatt, G.
Napier, Sir C.
Newport, Visct.
O'Brien, C.
O'Brien, W. S.
Osborne, R.
Paget, Col.
Pattison, J.
Pechell, Capt.
Philips, M.
Rice, E. R.
Thornely, T.
Trelawny, J. S.
Tuite, H. M.
Wakley, T.
Walker, R.
Warburton, H.
Williams, W.
Yorke, H. R.

TELLERS.
Mitchell, T. A.
Duncombe, T.

List of the Ayes.

Acheson, Visct.
Acland, Sir T. D.
Arbuthnott, hon. H.
Arkwright, G.
Bailey, J.
Bailey, J. jun.
Bankes, G.
Bannerman, A.
Barclay, D.
Barkly, H.
Baring, rt. hon. F. T.
Baring, T.
Barnard, E. G.
Barron, Sir H. W.
Bateson, T.
Bennet, P.
Bentinck, Lord G.
Beresford, Major
Berkeley, hon. C.
Berkeley, hon. Capt.
Bernard, Visct.
Bodkin, W. H.
Bodkin, J. J.
Borthwick, P.
Broadley, H.
Broadwood, H.
Browne, R. D.
Busfeild, W.
Byng, rt. hon. G. S.
Callaghan, D.
Chichester, Lord J. L.
Cholmeley, Sir J. M.
Christopher, R. A.
Clements, Visct.
Clifton, J. T.
Clive, Visct.
Conolly, Col.
Courtenay, Lord
Cowper, hon. W. F.
Craig, W. G.
Cripps, W.
Davies, D. A. S.
Dawson, hon. T. V.
Denison, J. E.
Disraeli, B.
Douglas, Sir H.
Douglas, J. D. S.
Drax, J. S. W.
Dugdale, W. S.
Duncannon, Visct.
Dundas, Adm.
Dundas, D.
Eastnor, Visct.
Ellice, rt. hon. E.
Entwisle, W.
Esmonde, Sir T.
Estcourt, T. G. B.
Etwall, R.
Ferguson, Sir R. A.
Ferrand, W. B.
Finch, G.
Fitzroy, hon. H.
Forbes, W.
Fox, C. R.
French, F.
Frewen, C. H.
Gaskell, J. M.
Gibson, rt. hon. T. M.
Gill, T.
Gordon, hon. Capt.
Goulburn, rt. hon. H.
Graham, rt. hon. Sir J.
Granby, Marq. of
Grey, rt. hon. Sir G.
Grimsditch, T.
Hamilton, G. A.
Hamilton, W. J.
Hanmer, Sir John

Harcourt, G. G.
Harris, hon. Capt.
Hawes, B.
Hayter, W. G.
Henley, J. W.
Herbert, rt. hon. S.
Hildyard, T. B. T.
Hill, Lord E.
Hobhouse, rt. hon. Sir J.
Hodgson, R.
Hogg, Sir J. W.
Hope, Sir J.
Hope, G. W.
Hornby, J.
Howard, hn. C. W. G.
Howard, P. H.
Hudson, G.
Hussey, T.
Inglis, Sir R. H.
James, W.
Jermyn, Earl
Jervis, Sir J.
Johnstone, H.
Jolliffe, Sir W. G. H.
Kemble, H.
Labouchere, rt. hon. H.
Langston, J. H.
Lascelles, hon. W. S.
Law, hon. C. E.
Lawless, hon. C.
Lawson, A.
Layard, Capt.
Lefroy, A.
Le Marchant, Sir D.
Liddell, hon. H. T.
Lincoln, Earl of
Lindsay, hon. Capt.
Loch, J.
Lockhart, A. E.
Lygon, hon. Gen.
Macaulay, rt. hn. T. B.
Mackenzie, W. F.
Maitland, T.
Manners, Lord J.
Marjoribanks, S.
Masterman, J.
Maule, rt. hon. F.
Miles, W.
Milnes, R. M.
Morpeth, Visct.
Mostyn, hon. E. M. L.
Mundy, E. M.
Mure, Col.
Neville, R.
Newdegate, C. N.
Newry, Visct.
Northland, Visct.
O'Brien, A. S.
O'Conor Don
Ord, W.
Oswald, J.
Pakington, Sir J.
Palmerston, Visct.
Parker, J.
Patten, J. W.
Peel, J.
Philipps, Sir R. B. P.
Pigot, Sir R.
Plumridge, Capt.
Protheroe, E. D.
Pulsford, R.
Rashleigh, W.
Rawdon, Col.
Reid, Sir J. R.
Reid, Col.
Repton, G. W. J.
Ross, D. R.
Rushout, Capt.
Russell, Lord J.
Rutherfurd, A.
Scott, hon. F.
Scrope, G. P.
Seymour, Lord
Sheppard, T.
Sibthorp, Col.
Smith, rt. hon. R. V.
Somerset, Lord G.
Somerville, Sir W. M.
Spooner, R.
Stansfield, W. R. C.
Staunton, Sir G. T.
Strutt, rt. hon. E.
Taylor, E.
Thompson, Ald.
Trollope, Sir J.
Tyrell, Sir J. T.
Vane, Lord H.
Verner, Sir W.
Villiers, Visct.
Vyse, R. H. R. H.
Waddington, H. S.
Ward, H. G.
Wawn, J. T.
Wellesley, Lord C.
Wodehouse, E.
Wood, rt. hon. Sir C.
Wood, Col. T.
Wortley, hon. J. S.
Wrightson, W. B.
Wyse, T.

TELLERS.

Hill, Lord M.
Tufnell, H.

Bill passed through Committee. House resumed. Report brought up and received, and Bill afterwards read a third time and passed.

SUGAR IN BREWERIES AND DISTILLERIES.

House in Committee of the whole House on the Customs and Excise Duties Act.

The CHANCELLOR OF THE EXCHEQUER commenced by saying, that he now proposed to state the measures which had been under the consideration of Her Majesty's Government, with reference to sugar, molasses, and rum. It seemed, from what passed last night and the night before, that some misapprehension had arisen in the minds of hon. Members as to whether the measures to be proposed would be of a temporary or of a permanent nature. He certainly thought, from the terms in which those measures had been mentioned, that no room was left for misapprehension. In regard to those laws of which Her Majesty's Government had proposed the temporary suspension, namely, the corn and navigation laws, one of them was a measure which had passed only last Session of Parliament by a large majority of that House, and from which, except for a time and under extraordinary circumstances, they ought not to depart; and as to the navigation laws, they, too, were of such a nature, and so much importance was attached by some persons to their maintenance, that, except under a similar pressure of extraordinary circumstances, a Government would not be justified in suddenly proposing to disturb them. In regard to the measures he was now about to lay before the House, hon. Gentlemen who were present at the end of last Session of Parliament, would recollect that he had expressed his intention early this Session to bring forward measures on the subject; and he rose in pursuance of that declaration to propose a permanent alteration in the Customs and Excise Acts, in reference to Sugar and Rum. The Act passed last Session, reducing the protection which the West and East Indian Colonies previously possessed, was a measure calculated to produce the most beneficial effects on the interests of this country; but these colonists had put forward a claim that the restrictions which had been imposed upon the use of their produce in this country should be relaxed also. The general justice of that claim, not precisely as regarded its amount, had been acceded to by Her Majesty's Government, and by the House. It would be remembered that towards the close of last Session, although there had been for many years past a higher duty on colonial rum than on British spirits, he felt himself justified in proposing that the difference should be reduced from 1*s*. 6*d*. to 1*s*. That reduction was accordingly made, and the Government undertook to give the claim which was made of a further reduction their best attention during the recess, and to lay the result of their deliberations before the House early this Session. He must at the same time say, that on every occasion in which he had advocated a reduction of the duty on sugar, he had advocated it, not only with a view to the benefit of the consumer, but with a view also to the increase of the revenue of the country. When a measure of this kind was proposed, therefore, he must not be expected to lose sight of those considerations; and accordingly, in proposing this measure, he had taken both objects into view. No person could be more convinced than he was of the general soundness of the policy of what were called the doctrines of free trade; but at the same time he thought it impossible to carry those doctrines to the extent which some Gentlemen occasionally advocated without injury to the interests of the revenue. His hon. Friend (Mr. Hume) talked last night as if it were the easiest thing in the world to reduce the duties on timber. His hon. Friend must know that those duties produced a revenue of 1,000,000*l.* per annum; and he had yet to learn how, if that were removed, the deficiency was to be met. He believed that, with the large amount of taxation which was required in this country, it would be impossible to raise it without a considerable amount of indirect taxation; and he believed it was equally clear, that it was impossible to raise any considerable sum in that way, unless in such a manner as to insure its being paid by the great body of the consumers, as no tax which pressed on a small body of the people could be expected to produce any large portion of revenue. He was, therefore, a little alarmed by the expectations which seemed to be entertained by his hon. Friend, that the timber duties would be reduced. It might also be recollected, that in the statement which he made last Session, in introducing the sugar duties, the prospects of the revenue and expenditure were not so promising as they had been for some time, assuming that for the year 1847-8, they were to have the same expenditure as was estimated for the year 1846-7, together with the increased expenditure which it was not necessary to provide for in this year, but the necessity for providing for which in the ensuing year had been entailed on them by the measures of the late Government, the probability was that the revenue would exhibit a deficiency of 300,000*l.* or 400,000*l.* The revenue, however, had exceeded the most sanguine expectations which had been then formed. It appeared from the balance-sheet, that up to the present time the revenue had considerably increased; and, if he could have any confidence in its continuance, he would be much more at ease on that subject than the present prospects of the country permitted him to be. It was perfectly true, that with respect to the customs' duties, they had increased upon every article, excepting those upon which the duties had been reduced; but the great increase had been upon the articles of sugar and corn. The noble Lord the Member for Lynn (Lord G. Bentinck) spoke correctly, when he said that if he (the Chancellor of the Exchequer) looked merely to the question of revenue, he should be sorry to lose the amount which was put into the Exchequer by the four shilling duty. But the present condition of the country, the state of Ireland, of some parts of Scotland, and also of some parts of England, would render it unjustifiable in him to look to the question of revenue alone in such an emergency. The amount of pressure which now weighed upon the country, the want of food, the high price of provisions, and the effect of all this upon the population, rendered it necessary to put aside, to a certain extent, any mere question of money for far higher considerations. It would be satisfactory to the people of Ireland to find that the Government of this country had done all in its power to reduce the price of corn, and to the Government itself that it had done all that it could do in the present emergency to alleviate the prevailing distress. These considerations alone, if none other existed, would appear to justify them, on the present occasion, in making some sacrifice of revenue. Not only had the customs' duties exhibited a very encouraging increase, but the produce of the excise had also been very considerable. It had exceeded the expectation of the right hon. Gentleman (Sir R. Peel) when he laid his statement before the House last year. Up to the 10th of October last, the excise duties had not only increased in this country, but in Ireland also. One of the many anomalies which met one at every turn in that country was, that the measures which had been taken for its supply last year, seemed so far to have increased its powers of consumption, that up to the 10th of October last, there was every appearance of prosperity, of the increase of wealth in that country. Since that period, however, a change had come over the revenue in that country. During the last quarter, the excise duties had fallen off to some extent in Ireland; and he was afraid that the House and the Government must take that fact to be, to a certain extent, the forerunner of what they had to expect in reference to this country also, because the distress which had effected the change in Ireland, had extended in some measure to certain districts both of Scotland and England. A vast number of mills had, for some time back, been working short time in Manchester and other places; whilst it appeared that every article of consumption was very highly priced all over the kingdom; so that, however prosperous the revenue had been for some years back, it would be erroneous to calculate, under existing circumstances, from past experience, upon a continued prosperity to the general revenue to the same extent. For the last three or four years good harvests, and great commercial activity, fostered, in a great degree, by judicious legislation, and cheapness in the price of provisions, caused by abundance, had produced the general prosperity of all classes, and enabled them to consume large quantities of articles, paying customs or excise duties. Now, however, they had high prices and deficient harvests; and he was afraid that they could not depend upon the permanency of the general commercial activity to which he had just alluded, although large importations of corn might, and undoubtedly would, give a considerable increase of orders upon our manufactures. From all these considerations, and from other circumstances over which neither the Government nor Parliament could exercise any control, he should not be justified in holding out any very sanguine prospects to the country as respected the continued prosperity of the revenue, when compared with its produce for the last three or four years. He did not wish now to anticipate any general financial statement which might hereafter be laid before the House by the Government; but he deemed it advisable, after what had fallen from his hon. Friend (Mr. Hume) on the previous evening, that he should state this much to the House; and he had this further reason for so doing, that in reference to the measure which he was about to introduce, he wished to show that it was not without some reason that he was careful about the revenue, and that in endeavouring to act justly and fairly between all parties concerned, he could not afford to run the risk of making any sacrifice of revenue. After having stated so much as preliminary matter, he would now proceed to give an outline of the measures which it became his duty to propose. The requests which had reached the Government from time to time from the producers of sugar, were, generally speaking, three. In the first place, the admission of sugar and molasses for use in breweries; in the second place, its admission for use in distilleries; and in the third place, the reduction of the differential duty between the customs' duty on rum and the excise duty on spirits, had been urged upon the Government. The first measure then related to the admission of sugar into breweries, to be used in the process of brewing. The request in reference to this subject was, that both sugar and molasses should be admitted into the breweries. So far as sugar was concerned, he saw no objection to such a measure. As the law at present stood, sugar might be freely used by private brewers. The measure which he proposed to submit to the House was to relieve the public brewers, the brewers for sale, from the present prohibitions, which prevented them from using sugar in the process of brewing. Now, in reference to this, with regard to revenue, it would be, in point of fact, a matter of comparative indifference whether sugar or malt was used in the process of brewing. The duty payable upon a quarter of malt was 21*s.* 8*d.* The quantity of sugar supposed to be equivalent to a quarter of malt, for the purposes of brewing, was 180 lbs.—the duty upon which would amount to about 22*s.* 6*d.* If that were so, if 180 lbs. of sugar, paying a duty of 22*s.* 6*d.*, were the equivalent for a quarter of barley, paying a duty of 21*s.* 8*d.*, the revenue, if the sugar displaced the barley in the process of brewing, would, on the whole, be a gainer rather than a loser. But he did not believe that sugar would altogether displace malt in the breweries. It would be the interest of the brewer not to brew from sugar alone, unless malt were at an extravagantly high price, or sugar extremely low. He believed that a certain quantity of sugar, though not a very large quantity, would be thus mixed with wort made from malt. This would, no doubt, facilitate the process of brewing, render it, to some extent, a cheaper process, reduce the price of the boer produced, and extend the use and consumption of malt; for whatever contributed to cheapen the price of beer to the consumer, would necessarily extend the use of the article. In reference to the consequences of this measure, his belief was, that it was one in which the West India producer of sugar, the consumer of malt liquor in this country, and the grower of barley, would all find their account, inasmuch as by facilitating the use and consumption of beer it would give rise to a much greater consumption of the various articles which would henceforth enter into its composition. Without going into any long argument to prove it, he would here state a fact, which afforded sufficient evidence that the malt tax was paid by the consumer. Within the last few weeks the price of barley and malt had greatly risen, so much so, indeed, that one of the large breweries in London had, for a time, actually suspended their malting operations. A meeting of brewers had taken place recently in the city, to consider what was to be done under existing circumstances; the result of which meeting had been, that a resolution had been agreed upon to raise the price of beer a penny per pot. Upon this being determined upon, the large brewing establishment alluded to recommenced their operations, and what enabled them to recommence the malting process was the payment by the consumer of the additional penny which had thus been imposed upon the price of a pot of beer. It was quite clear, that had sugar been admitted then into use in breweries, it would have been possible for the brewers to have substituted sugar for the high-priced malt which they were compelled to use, which would have enabled them to recommence operations without resorting to the expedient of raising the price of beer to the consumer; whilst the holders of barley, from its continued consumption, would have been equally benefited by the admission of sugar into breweries, as they had been by the increase of price. Even in ordinary times, therefore, he believed that this measure would prove to be an unalloyed benefit to all parties. Under existing circumstances, with the present high price of malt, he believed that a very considerable benefit would arise from it to the consumer. A few days ago the price of malt was 84*s.* a quarter. It appeared from a pamphlet which he held in his hand that it had since risen to 88*s.*; and he was informed last night by some Gentleman in the House, that it had been up to 90*s.* This was a very high price, but taking it at the lowest price, it was now 84*s.* a quarter. The cost of the material used in producing a given quantity of beer (about three barrels of strong beer) would be therefore 81*s.* 6*d.*, making allowance for the value of the grains. Sugar was at 47*s.* a cwt. duty paid. At that price, 180 lbs. of it, the equivalent of a quarter of malt, would cost about 75*s.* 6*d.*; consequently, as between the quantity of beer produced from malt or from sugar at the present average price of malt, and the present price of sugar, there was an advantage, as regarded the cost of the beer produced, from the latter of 6*s.*, which would go to the consumer. This would not only bring an increased quantity of beer into use, but would also tend to reduce, to some extent, the present exorbitant price of corn. He believed that if they took the price of malt for some years back, it had been at three guineas, or 62*s.*, a quarter; and, in order to enable sugar to compete with it, at that price, sugar must be as low as 35*s.* per cwt. duty paid, which was lower than he thought it likely to be. In ordinary times, therefore, there would be no competition between sugar and malt, in the process of brewing; but in times of scarcity like the present, sugar would displace malt, to a great extent, so that much of the barley which would otherwise be used for brewing purposes, would thus be released to the benefit of the consumer. The introduction of sugar would facilitate the process of brewing, and promote the consumption of malt; in ordinary times, the case would be analogous to that of foreign wool, the reduction of the duties upon which, and the results consequent upon that reduction, were favourable to the increase of the manufacture of the wool grown in this country, which was more easily worked up when mixed with foreign wool. By the introduction of sugar into brewing processes, the brewer would be enabled to work up a larger quantity of malting barley. With regard to sugar, therefore, the proposal which he had to make to the House was, that brewers might be permitted to use duty-paid sugar for the purpose of brewing. He also meant to propose the extension to beer brewed from sugar of the same drawback which was extended to malt liquors. With regard to the other article sought also to be admitted into use in brewing, he was not prepared to extend the same facilities to the use of molasses for such purpose. On more than one occasion sugar had already been permitted to be so used; but he was not aware that a similar permission had ever been extended to molasses. A difficulty would arise, should molasses be allowed to be so used, from its different qualities; and he was, on the whole, inclined to think that the inconveniences which would arise from sanctioning the use of molasses would preponderate over all the benefits which could possibly accrue. The value of the brewing qualities of molasses was far greater, in proportion to the duty levied upon it, than was that of sugar. The duty on molasses was *5s. 3d.* The quantity of molasses considered equivalent to a quarter of barley was estimated at 252 lbs. Of some kinds, it was held that 260 lbs. was the equivalent quantity, and of others again 303 lbs. The difference between 252 lbs. and 303 lbs. was about one-sixth; so that it was difficult to calculate what the equivalent with the duty would be. Assuming 252 lbs. of molasses to be equivalent to a quarter of malt, it would be necessary, in order that the revenue should not lose from the introduction of molasses into breweries, that a duty of 9*s.* 8*d.* instead of a duty of 5*s.* 3*d.* should be imposed upon it. In that case, therefore, one of the two courses must be taken—either a duty of 9*s.* 8*d.* must be imposed upon all molasses, or an excise duty must be imposed on all molasses used in brewing eqnivalent to the difference between that and 5*s.* 3*d.* If 303 lbs. should be taken as the equivalent to a quarter of malt, the necessary duty to make up the revenue would then be 8*s.*, and in that case the excise duty, should such a duty be preferred, would only be the difference between 8*s.* and 5*s.* 3*d.* It was, therefore, evident that a large door to fraud would be opened were molasses allowed to be used; for it would be difficult to distinguish between such molasses as paid and such as did not pay the excise duty. It would be necessary, in order to protect the revenue, to re-establish the minute excise survey which had been so long discontinued—a system which could not but prove both injurious and expensive to distillers and brewers—while he did not believe that the permission in question could be of any very great value to West Indian proprietors. The process of manufacturing sugar was daily improving in the West Indies, and the result was the production of a diminished quantity of molasses, and an increased quantity of rum. He now came to the question of distilleries. By the law as it at present stood, sugar might be used in distilleries. It might be used by any distiller on giving due notice of his intention so to do; but he was not allowed to use sugar and grain together. It was necessary too that a certain interval, prescribed by law, should elapse between the operation of distillation from grain and distillation from sugar. That regulation was indispensable, in order to guard against frauds upon the revenue, which it would be impossible to prevent if permission were given to use grain and sugar together in the process of distillation. Every Gentleman in the House would probably be disposed to yield a ready assent to the proposition that spirits were an article on which it was quite fair to raise the *maximum* amount of duty. No one could be anxious to extend the consumption of spirits by the reduction of duty. The only limit to the amount of duty upon spirit was the risk of illicit distillation. It was that which had hitherto regulated the amount of duty in the United Kingdom, and the rule was a sound one. In England the duty was, at present, 7*s.* 10*d.*, and upon the whole that might justly be deemed a fair amount; but in Scotland and Ireland it had been found utterly impossible to maintain so high a duty, or even one approaching it in amount. Attempts had been made to obtain a larger amount of revenue by raising the duty; but the object had invariably been defeated by the encouragement which was thereby given to illicit distillation. After considerable experience, it now seemed to be admitted that the amount of duty at present existing in each country was the highest that could be obtained without affording encouragement to illicit distillation, with all its train of demoralizing effects. Looking, therefore, at the immense amount of revenue fairly raised from spirits, it was of essential importance that in any measure which might be adopted, precautions should be taken against any loss or diminution of that revenue by the agency of fraud. One of the tests used in charging the duty on spirits made from grain would be wanting in the process of distillation from sugar. The excise officers said, that as far as their experience enabled them to form an opinion on the subject, it would be impossible to prevent fraud if the two articles, sugar and grain, were allowed to be used together in distillation. The House might recollect that a few years since the proprietors of a large distillery incurred penalties amounting to several hundred thousand pounds for frauds upon the revenue; and it was certainly desirable that precautions should be taken to guard against the occurrence of similar cases. It was not probable, however, that the withholding of permission to use sugar and grain conjointly in distillation would injuriously affect distillers, because, on referring to the evidence by distillers given before a Committee of the House, he found it to be their opinion that it was not advantageous to use molasses or sugar and grain together in the process of distillation. Mr. Atlee, a large distiller, said—

> "Sugar, molasses, or corn, should be worked separately. Working them together is never found effective. He would never use molasses and corn together. If a mixture be made of sugar or molasses with grain, they do not act together in the fermentation. Various experiments were tried, but he found it not to his advantage to mix the molasses and sugar with corn-wash, and therefore discontinued it."

Mr. Smith, another eminent distiller, said, in reply to various questions—

> "I think that molasses with grain could not be fermented with advantage together Using molasses together with corn, I think, would bring on loss by imperfect fermentation. I would never use molasses, except alone; so with sugar—so with corn. I would never mix them. With respect to molasses, it was perceived, on all hands, that that material could not be eligibly introduced into the distillery. I am sure that molasses, mixed with grain, would be injurious to us. When allowed to use sugar, we never brewed from a mixture of sugar and grain. If the use of molasses were permitted in the breweries, the facility thereby afforded to illicit distillation would be prodigious. The introduction of molasses into distilleries, I think, would lead extensively to smuggling. I do not wish to see molasses introduced, unless they were used separately and distinctly. The burning of sugar, to convert it into molasses, is one of the reasons why I would not use molasses. Let me have good plain sugar that I can judge of; but there is something in the very name of molasses that horrifies me. I have long been satisfied that to brew from a mixture of corn and molasses would not be advantageous, and the two processes would never work properly together, but would indeed be very disadvantageous."

Inasmuch, therefore, as it appeared from the evidence of the distillers that they did not think it advantageous to them to use sugar or molasses and grain together, and had not done so when permitted, he did not think it could be productive of any real disadvantage to maintain a prohibition necessary for the protection of the revenue. The main objection to the use of sugar in distilleries was the amount of duty levied on sugar. That objection he proposed to remove. He proposed to allow the use of sugar duty free in distilleries, except to this extent—that he must have on sugar used in distillation an amount of duty equivalent to the duty paid on malt used in distillation. In England spirit was distilled from various sorts of grain used in this proportion—two parts of malt, two parts of oats, and eighteen parts of barley. To make the case clear to the House, he would suppose that a quantity of spirit was run off from two quarters of malt, two quarters of oats, aud eighteen quarters of barley; it must be evident that the produce of that distillation would pay the amount of the spirit duty levied per gallon as well as the malt duty previously paid upon the two quarters of malt used in the process. What he proposed was, that spirit made from sugar should pay the same duty as spirit made from grain, and also a sum equivalent to the malt duty, so as to put sugar and malt on precisely an equal footing. The mode in which he proposed to effect this was, he conceived, free from all objection. He proposed that distillers should take sugar from the bonding warehouses, paying the duty upon it, and if they used it for purposes of distillation, when they came to pay the spirit duty, they should have an allowance from that equivalent to the difference between the duty which they had paid on sugar, and that which they would have to pay on malt. That difference, calculated according to the allowance made under previous Acts, would amount to 1*s.* 2*d.* per cwt.; consequently an allowance of 12*s.* 10*d.* on the quantity of spirit which it was calculated would be produced from a hundred-weight of sugar would leave that spirit in this situation—that it would be relieved from all the duty paid on spirit, and would have paid a duty equivalent to that paid upon malt used in producing a similar quantity. The distinction between the duty on beer and that on spirit was this—that, in the case of beer, the duty was levied on the raw material—malt; and in the case of spirit the main part of the duty was levied on the manufactured article, and only a part on a portion of the raw material employed—namely, malt. He found that, in previous Acts, it was calculated that 11½ gallons of spirit could be produced from a hundred-weight of sugar; and, therefore, 12*s.* 10*d.* would be deducted from the amount of spirit duty payable on that quantity. It had taken some time to explain that point, and he hoped that he had made himself clear. The calculation was, after all, an exceedingly simple one; it resulted in this—that on every 11½ gallons of spirit made from sugar, there would be a drawback of 12*s.* 10*d.* The allowance would be calculated on the 14*s.* duty payable on British colonial sugar; all other sugar would have paid the differential duty, and thus the British colonist would continue to enjoy the advantage established in his favour by the Act of last Session. He found the price of barley stated in the returns at 54*s.* He believed the price had advanced since the returns were made up; but he would take the present price to be 54*s.* The present price of sugar was 33*s.*, duty free, at which price it would fairly compete with barley at 54*s.* Looking back to a series of years, if he took the average price of malting barley at 30*s.*, he would not be far from the mark. To compete with barley at 30*s.*, sugar must reach a point as low as 18*s.* per cwt. It had not yet been sold at that price; and he did not think it likely that it would. In ordinary times, therefore, it would not be reasonable to anticipate much competition between barley and sugar. The competition would depend at all times on the relative prices of the two articles. When the price of barley was high, and that of sugar low, the latter would come into competition with the former; but when the price of sugar rose, and that of barley fell, the competition would cease; for under ordinary circumstances it was much more advantageous to distil from grain than from sugar. It was not his intention to admit molasses into distilleries; and in coming to that decision he was chiefly influenced by the consideration of the facilities which would thereby be afforded for defrauding the revenue — a point which was adverted to in the evidence of Mr. Smith, which he had read to the House. The trifling advantage which could be gained from allowing the use of molasses in distilleries would be more than counterbalanced by the expensive machinery it would be necessary to have recourse to in order to guard against fraud. He now came to the duty on rum. Last year the duty on British spirits was fixed at 7*s.* 10*d.*, and that on colonial rum at 9*s.* 4*d.* per gallon; being a difference of 1*s.* 6*d.* Many attempts had been made, at various times, to reduce the amount of the difference in the duty on rum and British spirits; but they had always been successfully resisted. The grounds on which the difference of duty was defended were various. One was no longer tenable; he alluded to the duty formerly imposed on the importation of foreign grain. Another ground was the malt duty; but that on which reliance chiefly was placed was the great disadvantage under which the British distiller laboured, and the increased outlay of capital to which he was compelled to have recourse, in order to conform with the regulations imposed by the Excise. Last year his attention was directed to the subject, and, being inclined to think that the disadvantages under which the British distillers laboured were more than covered by the differential duty on spirits, he called upon both parties to lay before him the view which they respectively took of the case. The West India interest, in compliance with the appeal which he made to them, estimated the British distillers' disadvantage as equivalent to 2*d.* per gallon; and they at the same time suggested, that the British distillers should be relieved from some of the restrictions which the excise laws imposed upon them in carrying on their trade. The British distillers, on the other hand, estimated their disadvantage as equivalent to 1*s.* 4*d.* per gallon. These were extreme statements; but, on the investigation he had been able to give the subject, he thought there were some grounds for the assertion that the distillers were subject to some disadvantages in prosecuting their trade in consequence of various restrictions. From reference to the most experienced excise officers, he thought they had some claim to relief on this ground; it was very difficult to say exactly what the amount of that relief should be: but he thought that the only probable grounds on which they claimed relief, were upon their own showing somewhere about 9*d.* or 10*d.* a gallon. The only possible mode of settlement was by a kind of compromise between the conflicting parties; he had some wish, perhaps, as Chancellor of the Exchequer, to sacrifice no more revenue than he could help; but on the whole he thought he should meet the justice of the case by reducing the differential duty on colonial spirit from 1*s.*, which it was at present, to 6*d.*, leaving it that amount, 6*d.*, above the duty paid by the English distiller. He now came to the question of the duty on colonial rum imported into Scotland and Ireland: that duty was not only different in Ireland and Scotland, but in both countries it was less than in England. It would be recollected that the excise duty on Scotch and Irish spirits was in both countries considerably lower than that in England: the respective rates being, in England, 7*s.* 10*d.*, in Scotland, 3*s.* 8*d.*, and in Ireland, 2*s.* 8*d.* The claim of the West Indians was, that they should be allowed to introduce rum into Scotland and Ireland at the same amount over the present duties in those countries as he proposed they should do over that in England: in other words, that rum should be allowed into Scotland and Ireland at a duty of 6*d.* higher than that charged on the native spirits of those countries. Thus, the import duty on rum would be 4*s.* 2*d.* per gallon for Scotland, and 3*s.* 2*d.* for Ireland. He found by a return he had that day received, that within the last thirty or forty years the quantity of rum imported into Scotland had diminished to an extraordinary degree. From 304,000 gallons, at which the import stood at the beginning of the century, it had sunk, through a variety of lessening quantities, 253,000 gallons, 241,000 gallons, 198,000 gallons, down to 104,000 gallons in 1836; and, for the year 1845, the whole quantity of colonial spirits entered for consumption in Scotland was no more than 43,000 gallons. In Ireland the diminution of the quantity imported had been still more extraordinary. In 1809 it was 1,000,000 gallons; it soon after began to fall off, and, for the last four or five years, the import had stood at such quantities as 13,000, 12,000, and 11,000 gallons a year. He thought much of this diminution had been caused by a change in the taste of the people, which led them to prefer the spirits produced in their own countries. Nevertheless, this broad fact was evident, that the importation of colonial spirits had been excessively diminished; and he thought that diminution justified him in reducing the import duty in those countries to the rates he had proposed. If he was right in his conclusion, that the diminished import was caused by a change in the taste of the people, he did not expect that the present reduction of the duty would produce any very great effect; in the seaports it might give an impulse to the consumption, but he did not anticipate any considerable increase in the inland districts. The best effect would be this—it would encourage the introduction of a sound article at a reasonable rate, and thus prevent the distillation of an inferior kind of spirit, which frequently passed as colonial rum; the change would benefit both consumer and producer. One objection which had been duly weighed by the Government, was the probability of an increase in smuggling, or the introduction of spirits which had paid the rate of duty in one country into another for consumption. But it was proposed to keep the transmission of spirits from one country to another under the present regulations; it would be moved only from one bonding warehouse to another; and when taken out for consumption, to pay the rate of duty for the country in which it was discharged from bond. Thus, spirits moved from Glasgow to England, and there taken into consumption, would pay the English rate of duty, and so with spirits moved from Scotland to Ireland, or *vice versâ.* From communications with the officers of excise, he could state that there would be no difficulty to speak of in preventing smuggling. Upon the whole, he hoped his proposal would be considered by the various interests as a fair settlement. With respect to its effect on the revenue, he did not think, on the balance of the different measures, there would be either a loss or gain. The loss consequent on the reduction in the duty on rum last year was 60,000*l.* He did not know whether it was to be attributed to that reduction or not; but he certainly found, that within the last three months there had been a great increase in the importation of rum, compared with the quantity imported in the corresponding months of the year preceding. In the month ending the 10th of October, 1845, there were imported 215,419 gallons; to the 5th of November, 194,570 gallons; to the 5th of December, 245,391 gallons. In the month ending the 10th of October, 1846, the quantity imported was 263,681 gallons; to the 5th of November, 222,999 gallons; the 5th of December, 300,304 gallons. The total quantity for the last three months of 1845 was 655,380 gallons; for the same period of 1846 it was 789,984 gallons, being an increase over the import of 1845 of 134,604 gallons. He was sanguine enough to believe that the loss of revenue by the reduction of the duty would thus be more than made up by the increased consumption; 26,000*l.* was all the revenue derived from the duty on rum in Ireland and Scotland—no great amount. He would now state the result of these various measures. Sugar, duty paid, would be allowed to be used in breweries; sugar, practically duty free, would be permitted to be used in distilleries; there would be a reduction of 6*d.* a gallon in the duty on rum imported into England, and that import duty in Ireland and Scotland, which was practically a prohibitory one, would be considerably reduced. If the result of the measure with regard to breweries and distilleries should have the effect of setting free a greater amount of barley for human food, he should feel rejoiced. At the present moment they must depend to a considerable extent on barley for the supply of food; and if any quantity of that grain should be displaced and made available for human food he should not regret it. He did not expect that these measures would reduce the price of grain, but they would tend to keep them from rising higher. He did not think it necessary to prohibit the use of grain in distilleries; it would not set free such a quantity of corn for human food as would justify them in deranging the operations of trade. One immediate effect would be to give an immediate impulse to illicit distillation. Now in that illicit process it was calculated that one-third of the grain used was wasted. This was a serious evil, and to the extent of one-third the supposed benefit of stopping legal distilleries might not be realized. In point of fact, however, distillation from grain was at that moment to a great extent stopped in Ireland by the high price of barley. He had received a letter from a great Irish distiller, dated the 14th of January, from which he would read an extract. It said—

> " Since the 19th of December the corn-markets of this country have undergone great changes, and prices of all grain have run up to excessive rates, and even at these there has been such a falling off in the supply of distillers' corn that some houses are about to stop working, having none, and being unable to procure any. I may say that by far the greater proportion of barley that will be used by distillers for the rest of the season will be foreign. In fact, the price of English barley acts of itself as a prohibition, being nearly 60*s.* a quarter for such quality as distillers purchase. This, together with its scarcity, will in all probability have the effect of inducing them to use sugar and molasses, if any measure be introduced by Government for that purpose."

Distillation from grain being practically stopped, it was not worth while to make any further attempt that way; to give facilities for the use of sugar both in breweries and distilleries would, he believed, be an effectual means of attaining the object they all had in view; and the circumstances which made these measures necessary rendered it most desirable that they should be passed with as little delay as possible consistent with their practical consideration. The right hon. Gentleman concluded by moving the following Resolutions:—

1. *Resolved*—That it is expedient to suspend, for a time to be limited, the Duties on the importation of Buck Wheat, Buck Wheat Meal, Maize or Indian Corn, Indian Corn Meal, and Rice.

2. *Resolved*—That it is expedient to allow the use of Sugar in the brewing of Beer.

3. *Resolved*—That there be allowed and paid a Drawback of five shillings, and five per centum on the exportation to foreign parts of every thirty-six gallons of Beer or Ale, the worts used in the brewing whereof shall not be of lower specific gravity than 1·054; and a Drawback of seven shillings and sixpence, and five per centum on the exportation of such Beer or Ale, the worts used in the brewing whereof shall not be of less specific gravity than 1·081.

4. *Resolved*—That an allowance of twelve shillings and ten pence be granted to every Distiller of Spirits in the United Kingdom for and in respect of every eleven gallons and a half (and so in proportion) of Spirits produced from Sugar used by such Distiller in the making of Spirits upon which the Duties granted by Law shall have been paid.

5. *Resolved*—That it is expedient to make Regulations relative to the Distillation of Spirits from Sugar, in England, Scotland, and Ireland.

6. *Resolved*—That in lieu of the Duties of Customs now chargeable on the articles undermentioned, imported into the United Kingdom, the following Duties shall be charged, viz.

Spirits, or Strong Waters, for every gallon of such Spirits or Strong Waters, of any strength not exceeding the strength of Proof by Sykes's hydrometer, and so on in proportion for any greater or less strength than the strength of Proof, and for any greater or less quantity than a gallon, viz.

Spirits, or Strong Waters, the produce of any British Plantation in America, not being sweetened Spirits, or Spirits mixed with any article, so that the degree of strength thereof cannot be exactly ascertained by such hydrometer,

	s.	*d.*
If imported into England, the gallon ...	8	4
,, Scotland ,, ...	4	2
,, Ireland ,, ...	3	2

Spirits, Rum, the produce of any British Possession within the limits of the East India Company's Charter, not being sweetened Spirits, or Spirits so mixed as aforesaid, in regard to which the conditions of the Act 4 Vic. c. 8. have or shall have been fulfilled,

	s.	*d.*
If imported into England, the gallon...	8	4
,, Scotland ,, ...	4	2
,, Ireland ,, ...	3	2

Spirits, Rum Shrub, however sweetened, the produce of and imported from such Possessions, in regard to which the conditions of the Act 4 Vic. c. 8, had or shall have been fulfilled, or the produce of and imported from any British Possession in America,

	s.	*d.*
If imported into England, the gallon...	8	4
,, Scotland ,, ...	4	2
,, Ireland ,, ...	3	2

Resolutions to be reported on Monday next.

The Resolution having been put,

Lord G. **BENTINCK** said, the perfect mastery of the subject the right hon. Gentleman had displayed, and the perspicuity and simplicity with which he had explained the measures of Her Majesty's Government, left no one an excuse for pretending he did not understand them; but the House would scarcely expect him to enter into all these details. The measures of the Government were not liable to the great objection he had so often stated against the remission of taxes paid for the most part by foreigners, in preference to the remission of other taxes paid almost exclusively by British subjects. Though the proposition was one for admitting a certain kind of produce to a rivalship with that of the agriculture of this country, yet, with the exception of foreign slave-grown sugar, it was not a question between foreign and British produce, and therefore not open to the objection he had always raised to the free admission of foreign productions to compete with British. There was another reason why he was not disposed strongly to object to the proposition of the Government, and it was this—that he did not think it would in any degree diminish the revenue of the country. They had drawn from the right hon. Gentleman a gloomy picture of the prospects of one portion of the revenue, and of the state of the manufacturing districts as well as of Ireland; but it was, nevertheless, some consolation to his (Lord G. Bentinck's) Friends, the protectionists, to learn that it was owing to the fact that the political economists and free traders had not meddled with the great heads of the revenue, namely, the taxes on tobacco, and sugar, and tea, and excise, that the right hon. Gentleman did not come before the House as a bankrupt. He was not going to follow his right hon. Friend in his detailed statement; he, as did others, wished for time for more mature consideration; and his chief object in rising was to beseech his noble Friend the First Lord of the Treasury to pass this as a temporary rather than as a permanent measure. The noble Lord must have perceived it was the great desire of his (Lord G. Bentinck's) Friends to support the noble Lord to the utmost of their power in every measure connected with Ireland, whether or not they were enabled to approve of such scheme altogether or not; that they were most anxious to avoid throwing any the slightest obstacle in the way of Her Majesty's Government in their attempt to avert the present famine, whether or not they were convinced that the best course to attain that end was being taken. He could not, therefore, be misunderstood, when he most earnestly prayed that the noble Lord would give his consent, without prejudice to the Government, on the one side, or to them (the protectionists), on the other, to deal with the present as only a temporary measure, and, at some later period of the Session, when the affairs of Ireland were settled, to come to the House, if he then thought fit, with the permanent Bill. The right hon. Gentleman would admit, if the high prices of malt had induced a certain great maltster and brewer to suspend the carrying on his business, that the effect also would be to diminish the consumption of barley — thereby lowering the price; he was not, therefore, prepared to concur in the opinion, that the tax upon malt was paid entirely by the consumer, as the right hon. Gentleman had stated. He could not understand what was meant by his right hon. Friend, if he maintained that the tax was paid *in toto* by the consumer, when the effect of the high price of beer had been such as to compel the suspension of the operations of malting. He (Lord G. Bentinck) apprehended that, if no malting went on, barley could not be sold; when, of course, the consequence would be very much to lower the price of barley; and this he regarded as a material loss to the grower of barley. Therefore, whilst consenting that sugar should enter for the present into competition with barley, he begged to inform his noble Friend, frankly and above board, that it would add another to the claims of the agriculturists upon the Government for the remission of the malt and hop duties. His right hon. Friend the Chancellor of the Exchequer had stated that the increased price of malt had increased the price of beer by a penny a pot; if, however, the duty were reduced on malt and hops, the price of beer would be brought back to what it was before, inasmuch as these taxes amounted to a penny a pot: and, let it be remembered, these were taxes paid exclusively by British subjects. These were the reasons why he entreated that his right hon. Friend should pass the present measure as a temporary measure, in order that he might proceed with the other measures for the relief of Ireland without any obstruction. He could assure his noble Friend, that if he persevered in making it a permanent measure, many hon. Members would feel themselves obliged to offer every obstruction to its becoming the law. Therefore he besought his noble Friend to listen to the prayer of those who made it, in perfect good will, without the least desire to embarrass his Government upon the subject.

Mr. SMITH O'BRIEN confessed that he had never heard a statement with more disappointment than that of the Chancellor of the Exchequer. He had been inclined to believe that the Government would bring forward their measure as a proposal to increase the supply of food by diminishing the consumption of grain in breweries and distilleries, and he had expected that some statement would have been made by the Chancellor of the Exchequer to show that such would be the tendency of this measure. The Chancellor of the Exchequer, however, told the House, that he proposed to admit sugar into breweries and distilleries; but that, except under certain contingencies, he did not think that it would diminish the consumption of barley. As he understood the statement of the right hon. Gentleman, he believed it would rather increase the prices. The admission of molasses would have displaced grain from the breweries, and would therefore have been a boon to those desirous of diminishing the consumption of grain in those establishments; but the Chancellor of the Exchequer told them that he had no intention of proposing it. The same statement was applicable to distilleries; sugar was to be used there, but not molasses. Molasses would displace grain, and release it for food; sugar would not do so, except when the prices of barley were very high.

The CHANCELLOR of the EXCHEQUER explained that his statements referred to present prices. In brewing thirty-six gallons of strong beer, there was at present a difference of 6*s*. in favour of malt.

Mr. SMITH O'BRIEN would accept that explanation. In point of fact, as the case was stated by the right hon. Gentleman himself, they were not to expect any sort of increase to the supply of food for the Irish people from the measures of Her Majesty's Government. That was a most appalling fact under the present circumstances of that country. He should have expected that any measure of this character would have facilitated to the farthest extent the substitution of sugar and molasses for grain. The duty of Government, in his opinion, was to prohibit the use of grain altogether in distilleries and breweries; and he could not understand how the present measure would be of service in increasing the supply of grain for food. The statement of the right hon. Gentleman was most untimely; he thought he would have heard him declare the intention of Government to prohibit the use of grain—if Her Majesty's Ministry had but done so, they would have liberated 30,000,000 stone of corn for the ensuing year.

Mr. D. CALLAGHAN had heard the proposition of Government with great regret. He was quite prepared to say, that it would have a very great effect on the growth of grain in Scotland and Ireland; what would be its effects in England he left to the consideration of the agricultural party in the House and elsewhere. The Chancellor of the Exchequer had no doubt made out his case very clearly; but he would endeavour to show the House, by one or two simple instances, that the right hon. Gentleman might not have sufficiently considered all the points of his case. Let them just look at the differential duty between spirits made from molasses in the West Indies, and from corn in Ireland and Scotland. It was well known that spirits were made in the latter countries from malt and raw corn. Now, the right hon. Gentleman had not at all dealt with the case of malt spirits in either country. He was going to add 6*d*. to the spirit duty in Scotland and Ireland at present, and would let in rum against it with only 6*d*. difference. When the 3*s*. 8*d*. duty paid in Scotland should have added to it the duty paid upon the malt, and that was at least 6*d*. in that country—that 6*d*. being added to the 3*s*. 8*d*. made the whole duty 4*s*. 2*d*.; and the duty on rum, to be admitted against it, would be only 4*s*. 4*d*.; making a difference between the spirits of only 1½*d*. or 2*d*. He allowed the West Indian to distil from molasses; but he would not allow the Scotchman or the Irishman to do so. There was no reciprocity in the case, and this was a point which his right hon. Friend must alter in Committee. He had no doubt of the right hon. Gentleman's good intentions; but he must, on looking into this point, see the justice to the distillers and agriculturists of making some alteration in this respect. He could not but say, that knowing, as he did, the vast amount of capital expended on this branch of business in Ireland, and in his own county (Cork) particularly—fostered as it had been by every Government up to the present time—he looked with dismay on this proposition, and on the change which would take place in consequence. They would be driven to free trade in self-defence; and the result must be, that the distillers' trade would be destroyed. He, therefore, could not rest without making that statement, which he hoped would have the effect of inducing Her Majesty's Government to reconsider some points of their present measure.

Mr. G. BANKES begged to join in the urgent request of his noble Friend the Member for Lynn, that this measure might be passed merely as a temporary rather than as a permanent measure. The Chancellor of the Exchequer had stated that one of the main objects in bringing forward this measure was to aid in alleviating the present calamities of Ireland. They were of course all willing to do what they could for the relief of Ireland; but as he hoped that its distress would be but temporary, this measure would not be considered as a permanent one with reference to that particular object. The noble Lord (Lord J. Russell) was perfectly aware that there had been a very strong feeling manifested during the last few months in reference to the duties upon malt. He was also well aware that on that day a large and influential deputation had waited upon him urging strongly the claims of the agricultural interest on this subject. He was also well aware that the gentlemen who addressed him at that deputation, although they had unanimously agreed as to the necessity of the remission of the duty on malt, had, notwithstanding, in the present difficult state of the country, consented to waive their immediate desire upon that head; and he thought, therefore, that the noble Lord would feel that those persons had a just and honourable claim to have this matter considered at some subsequent period, when it might be calmly and fully deliberated upon, free from those circumstances of anxiety which must surround every subject coming before the House in the present emergency. As the class of whom he had spoken had consented to waive their claims, he therefore urgently requested the noble Lord would, on his side, waive his intention of rendering this a permanent measure until that period had arrived when it could be calmly and coolly considered on its intrinsic merits. He perfectly agreed with the noble Lord that this was a very different measure from those measures in which the interests of the foreigner were considered as competing with those of this country. They were perfectly aware that the colonial interest was to be considered as an integral part of the interests of the nation; but, inasmuch as the question of the slave trade and of the foreign-grown sugar was involved in this question, he sincerely hoped that the noble Lord might accede to the request that the measure should only be a temporary one.

Mr. GOULBURN said, that at the close of the last Session he had taken upon himself the liberty of advising those who were deeply interested in the prosperity of the West Indies to avoid taking any rash measures for throwing their estates out of cultivation, in consequence of the views of the Government as to the admission of foreign sugar. In giving them this advice he deliberately stated to them—and he had said to the House at the time—that in consideration of the competition to which they were then to be exposed from foreign commodities, he thought they had an irresistible claim to have their produce admitted to fair competition with other produce, whether of the United Kingdom or the colonies; and that in that claim they should have every support that he could give them. He felt, therefore, that he individually was under a particular obligation on the present occasion to support the claim of the colonies to the admission of their produce to those advantages which the right hon. Baronet the Chancellor of the Exchequer offered them, and which, taken generally, were offered in a fair and liberal spirit. Hon. Friends near him suggested that there were interests in this country which had a strong claim upon the Government to demand that the present arrangement should be only temporary; but they must consider, on the other hand, that the colonial interest at the end of last Session, when their produce was exposed to competition with the foreigner, had a fair claim to say that that was the period at which they should receive a permanent advantage. They were not now, therefore, for the first time discussing this question; they were merely fulfilling a pledge which he understood to have been given by the right hon. Baronet that the question should be fully considered at the earliest period of the Session, and which had influenced him in the advice he publicly gave to his hon. Friends behind him to accept the terms of the Government, and the plan of the sugar duties then under consideration. With respect to the propriety of making this measure temporary, his hon. Friends who sat beside him had not stated the period of time to which they proposed that this measure should be limited: his hon. Friend near him said, to the month of September next. Now this was, as the right hon. Baronet had properly stated, not a measure brought forward with a view to relieve the distress which existed in Ireland; it was a measure which would have been brought forward had there been no distress prevailing in any part of the United Kingdom. It was a commercial arrangement, based on previous claims, and rendered necessary by them in order to deal justly with the interests of a great body of our fellow-subjects; and he would ask any man whether a commercial arrangement intended to last till the month of September next was calculated to benefit any interest whatever? If there was any one point against which experience had warned them, it was the imprudence of a temporary arrangement for a short period. They knew perfectly well that the annual arrangement which used to be made respecting the sugar duties was to that particular interest a source of great vexation, pecuniary loss, and, what was worse, gambling speculation. They had felt that for a considerable number of years; but what must be the inconvenience if they now said that they would enact the reduction of the rum duties merely to bring them nearer to the equivalent duties on British produce; and enact it only until the month of September, leaving the subject to be then reconsidered. The effect of that would be to create a great deal of speculation in the public mind as to whether Government was strong enough or was disposed to carry the measure, and therefore they would have the whole trade paralysed, and a door left open for operations founded on information which particular parties might think themselves enabled to derive, either from the opinions expressed in Parliament, or conversations which might be held with persons officially connected with the Government. Whether as regarded the manufacturer in England, or the importer from the West Indies, it would place them in such a position that neither would be enabled to carry on his trade with effect. If it were wished that the measure should be operative, either by the withdrawal of barley from the general consumption, and the substitution of sugar, or in any other way, the end would not be attained by a temporary arrangement; for he did not believe that any one would have the hardihood to embark his capital in the manufacture of spirits, or still less of beer, from sugar, or in the importation of the material, under a law which was only to last for the limited space of some five or six months. He trusted, therefore, that they would take a larger and more general view of this question, and would be prepared to say whether, after freedom of trade with foreign countries had been sanctioned and established, they would impose particular restrictions on the colonies; whether the latter had not a claim to participate in the advantages offered by the present plan. With respect to the details of the measure, he should say but little; the statement made by the right hon. Baronet had been throughout so clear, and the grounds on which it was brought forward so ably expressed, that he should only weaken the effect of that statement if he were to attempt to go through its arguments. He agreed with the right hon. Baronet, as far as related to the admission of sugar into breweries and distilleries, that exaggerated views had been taken by the colonists of the benefits it was likely to confer; and if alarms were entertained by those who supplied barley to these establishments at present, he thought their fears could only arise from not having duly attended to the circumstances of the case. He entirely concurred with the Chancellor of the Exchequer that the revenue must be protected, not only for the sake of the two great interests concerned, but because it was essential to the general welfare and prosperity of the country. Though he might be disposed to argue, if revenue considerations were not concerned, that the indulgence given to sugar should be extended also to molasses; yet knowing, as he did, the extent of fraud which the introduction of that article into breweries and distilleries would occasion, and the loss the revenue would thereby sustain, he thought the right hon. Baronet had shown ample grounds for the exclusion of that particular commodity. The right hon Baronet had justly stated that sugar would probably not be generally introduced into distilleries, unless there should be concurrently a high price of malt and a low price of sugar. The calculations on which the right hon. Baronet had founded his statement could not, he thought, be overthrown; but the experience they had, also showed generally that the introduction of sugar would not to any extent displace barley or malt. As the law at present stood, private breweries might use sugar in the manufacture of the beer they consumed; and the consumption of malt in private breweries amounted to three-eighths of the whole produce of the country. These private breweries were not merely confined to gentlemen who brewed only for their own consumption; but extended also to those who, employing large numbers of persons, gave beer as part of the wages; and to whom it was, therefore an object to brew at the least possible cost. And yet, after the most diligent inquiry, at a time when malt had been at an exaggerated price, he did not know an instance in which it appeared that sugar had been used in breweries. He remembered that Mr. Calvert, one of the greatest brewers in the metropolis, when examined before a Committee of that House on that particular point, stated that it was not for the advantage of public brewers to use sugar, even when malt had reached a price of 75*s*. or 80*s*. It was not, therefore, his opinion that sugar would be extensively introduced, or that any diminution of the quantity of malt would ensue from the admission of sugar in breweries. But the power given to each manufacturer of freely exercising his own discretion as to the materials he should use in the course of trade, was of itself a considerable advantage; and when periods arrived at which, from the fluctuation of the market, he might otherwise be compelled to contract his operations, trade would not be disturbed, because the substitution of sugar for malt would be the means of carrying it on equably and regularly without any alteration in the price of the commodity. He should not enter on the part of the plan which referred to the duty on rum, as from the terms of the right hon. Gentleman's notice, he had not expected that any statement on the subject would be made; and, therefore, he was not prepared with the documents necessary for an examination of the particular amount of differential duty proposed to be retained in favour of the British producer. Nothing could be more difficult or intricate than to weigh the inconvenience sustained by one interest against that sustained by another, and to reduce them to pecuniary values. In assenting to the proposal of the right hon. Baronet on the present occasion, he of course reserved to himself the liberty of further considering the whole system embraced in the measure when it again came before the House. But generally he would express his opinion that in proposing this measure the right hon. Baronet had taken a course at once just to the interests concerned, beneficial as regarded the general interests of the country, and had fulfilled the pledge given at the close of last Session that the subject should be brought forward at the earliest possible period.

Mr. WODEHOUSE hoped that the earnest requests of the noble Lord the Member for Lynn, and of the hon. Member for Dorsetshire, that the measure should be but temporary, would be acceded to by the Government. He believed he spoke the feeling of all around him when he said that every measure which the Government might think it wise to propose for the relief of Ireland in her present calamity should have their earnest support; but he must at the same time beg the noble Lord (Lord John Russell) to bear in mind that the agricultural interests were materially altered by the measures of last year, and it was truly impossible for those who had represented those interests in that House to hesitate for a moment in co-operating with the farming interests in their attempts to procure the abolition of the malt tax. Her Majesty's Ministers might prepare themselves, therefore, for the unmistakeable demand which would soon be made upon them to repeal that tax. The poor as well as the rich were equally interested in the success of the efforts which the agricultural party was about to make for the abolition of the duty upon malt.

Mr. HUME wished to ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer whether there would be any objection to lay before the House in an intelligible form the reason why the Government was not prepared to extend to molasses the same favour as was proposed with respect to sugar? It evidently appeared, from what had fallen from the right hon. Gentleman, that in ordinary circumstances, the free admission of sugar into breweries and distilleries would have no effect; it might during the present price of barley, but generally speaking, he believed it would be inoperative. Therefore, the only article that would produce an effect was that of molasses, which this measure would shut out. He understood the right hon. Gentleman to say that the excise regulations were against its admission. If that was the reason, they ought at once to get rid of the excise, because it stood in the way of the public having cheap beer: it would render it impossible for them to profit by the great measure just proposed. He, therefore, hoped that his request as to the full explanation of the Chancellor of the Exchequer's reason for not bringing molasses under the operation of this measure, would be complied with at some future period. On the whole, he thought that the right hon. Gentleman had made a very fair proposition.

MR. FINCH trusted that the Government would not refuse to accede to the request that the measure should be only temporary. He had no intention of opposing the measure, but it was but right that the Government should, by making it merely temporary, afford the Members of the House an opportunity of consulting with their constituents, for the purpose of ascertaining their views of the proposal. He was glad to hear that this measure had been introduced principally with a view of mitigating Irish distress; and with regard to the colonial interests, he felt that they should be promoted. He believed that there was no portion of the British dominions that had greater reason to complain than the West Indian colonists, who had been deprived of that protection to which they were so justly entitled. It was justly said that this question did not merely relate to the British colonies, but also to foreign sugar growers. He had that day read of the arrival of three ships from the Brazils, laden with sugar, and it was stated that more arrivals might presently be expected from the same quarter; and he felt pretty confident that a large portion of the Brazilian sugar might be used in the distilleries and breweries. This was a measure, therefore, that involved foreign colonial produce and the slave trade; but as he had said, he was not certain that the agriculturists of this country would feel themselves called upon to oppose it. All that they asked was time for deliberation. The right hon. Gentleman (Mr. Goulburn) had said that if the measure were limited to the 1st of September, the limitation of its operation might frustrate its beneficial effect. He did not understand his hon. Friend the Member for Dorsetshire (Mr. Bankes) to suggest that it should be limited to September. All he had asked was, that the Government would consent that the measure should, in the first instance, be but temporary; and such a request as that was but just. At all events, England, Ireland, and Scotland, should have time fairly to consider the matter. They should have an opportunity of consulting their representatives. He believed, however, that the consumers of beer in this country would be losers rather than gainers by the free admission of sugar into breweries and distilleries.

MR. BARCLAY hoped that the noble Lord would persevere in the proposal to abolish the restrictions upon the use of sugar in brewing and distillation. He would not enter into the question of the distress in Ireland. He rose on behalf of the colonies, and must express his decided conviction, that when protection had been withdrawn, a pledge had been given to the colonies that no restriction should be placed on the use of their staple commodities. And, indeed, that was but an act of simple justice, and what the colonies had a fair right to claim. It was a hardship that our colonial sugar should be subject to any duty whatever; for the sugar of Jamaica was as the wheat of England, and it was as unjust to levy a duty on the former as it would be on the latter. Hon. Gentlemen wished that this measure might be only of temporary character; but they gave the House reason to think that, at a later period, they would not be disinclined to its becoming a permanent one. Why not at once adopt the bolder step? Why tamper with a question of so much importance? The colonies were an integral part of the empire, and their fellow-subjects there were entitled to the same privileges. It was, therefore, most unjust to make their staple products the sport of capricious legislation. They all sympathized in the distress of the people of Ireland, and were anxious to relieve it; and he trusted that hon. Gentleman opposite would withdraw the slight opposition they had put forward, and give their support to the proposition of his right hon. Friend.

LORD G. BENTINCK: The late Chancellor of the Exchequer, in the anxieties of a sugar planter, has, I fear, overlooked the necessities of Ireland. As to what has fallen from some hon. Gentleman opposite, there was, I may remark, an understanding, I will not say a compact, that there was to be a truce to all political hostility, until the affairs of Ireland had been settled. Of course I mean the afflicting, and I trust only temporary, calamity under which that country now suffers. Religious or political questions, repeal of the Union, or equal privileges, and such considerations, must of course, be considered apart from the present exigency. But, Sir, although I am prepared, on account of this calamitous condition of Ireland, to make a truce with the Ministry at present, I am far from making any compromise of principle; but only say that, in order to alleviate the condition of the people of Ireland, our political hostility is to be laid aside until the calamity which overhangs that country be dispelled. It is, however, only in a temporary character, that the admission of sugar into breweries and distilleries can be viewed as alleviating the condition of the Irish people. And in this view I am supported by the hon. Member for Cork (Mr. Callaghan), who is opposed to its being a permanent measure. The late Chancellor of the Exchequer misrepresented, unintentionally I am sure, my hon. Friend the Member for Dorsetshire. My hon. Friend never said a word about the 1st of September as the limit to the temporary period of suspension. Neither myself nor my hon. Friend object that the measure should be passed for a year, if my noble Friend so think fit. And when my noble Friend introduces his measures for the permanent improvement of Ireland, he will be then at perfect liberty to introduce this as a permanent measure if he should think proper so to do. As to what has fallen from the hon. Gentleman the Member for Sunderland, respecting the colonial interest, I think we on this side of the House have shown quite as deep an interest in the welfare of the colonies as the hon. Gentleman. I think the hon. Gentleman was not one of those who by the course he took when the sugar duties were discussed last year, earned for himself the gratitude of the colonial interest, as I rejoice to know those about me did. Therefore, I say, Sir, with no sort of hostility towards the colonies, I ask for time for the agricultural interest to consider whether or no they will consent to such a measure as this being made permanent. When the right hon. Gentleman (the late Chancellor of the Exchequer) tells the House that Mr. Calvert, the brewer, stated before a Committee of the House of Commons that sugar could not advantageously enter into competition with malt, until the price of malt rose to 75*s.* or 80*s.*; the right hon. Gentleman forgets that since that evidence was given, the duty was reduced on colonial sugar from 24*s.* to 14*s.* per cwt., and, what we think of far greater importance, the duty upon slave-grown sugar and foreign sugar has been reduced from 3*l.* 3*s.* per cwt. to 14*s.* in the year 1851. An hon. Gentleman has asked why we do not tax our corn. Sir, I believe our corn, though not directly, is indirectly taxed at the present moment to a very large amount. We pay between 4,000,000*l.* and 5,000,000*l.* for tithe out of our agricultural produce. [Mr. M. Gibson: Hear.] I think the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Manchester has forgotten when, in the ranks of the Conservatives, he represented the county of Suffolk, he was wont to maintain that tithes were a tax on agriculture, and I presume barley pays its share. In short, there can be no doubt but agricultural produce is taxed to a very high degree. I, for one, never would ask for any protection for agriculture, were there not special and heavy burdens which oppress it. But when the effect of those duties on malt, and the effects of this measure upon breweries are talked of, I must say that I think sugar is much more likely to come into competition with malt in distilleries than in breweries. I think the effect of the measure will be very much to reduce the price of spirits. I concur with the Chancellor of the Exchequer in this, that if the excise duty is to be put on any thing, spirits are precisely the articles on which it ought to be imposed, for I think a high tax on spirits and a low tax on beer would be beneficial to the morals of the people. Such a tax would be, therefore, in my mind, most justifiable. The effect of the reduction of duty on spirits in 1823 has been to double the consumption of ardent spirits, viz., from 13,000,000 of gallons then, to 26,000,000 of gallons at present. [Lord J. Russell: Not so; illicit distillation was extensive before the reduction of duty, and the increase of population must be taken into account.] I think that any Gentleman who walks down Holborn must be struck with the number of gin palaces which meet his eye on both sides of the way. And most of these have sprung up since the duty was reduced; so that I think I am not far from the truth, when I say that the consumption has doubled since the reduction of the duty. And how does the case stand with regard to the consumption of beer? Why, Sir, that has not increased in the same proportion. The consumption of beer has not increased 30 per cent during the last twenty-five years, whereas the population has increased in a greater ratio than 30 per cent. I think it is highly questionable whether we should further reduce the duty on spirits, without making at the same time a similar, or a greater, reduction in the price of beer. The right hon. Gentleman opposite seemed desirous that rum should take the place of whisky and other spirits the native manufacture of Scotland; but I do not see why the Scotch people should not be permitted to continue to drink their own favourite Glenlivat, which they think much preferable. I will not further enter into the question; but I hope, for the sake of maintaining good feeling, that we may, as far as possible, agree in some remedial measures for Ireland immediately; that my noble Friend will not, for the sake of the colonial interests (much as I regard them), press on this measure in its permanent shape. If so, it may interfere with the settlement of Irish affairs. He ought to recollect that this measure does not stand on the same footing with the other measures proposed; it is not a temporary alleviation of the sorrows of Ireland, but one which, in fact, is permanent, and in which Ireland has no interest. If it will prove injurious to any part of the empire, it will prove, at least, equally injurious to Ireland; and recollecting these things, and knowing that it is not a remedial measure, if the House accede to the proposition which I have made, it will obviate the necessity for further discussion or division.

MR. BORTHWICK was opposed to the measure being temporary. An increased demand for sugar would be created, the cessation of which, after capital had been invested to supply it, would seriously injure the West Indian proprietors.

LORD JOHN RUSSELL: I much regret that I must decline acceding to the proposition of my noble Friend opposite. My noble Friend, on the first day of the Session, demonstrated so much absence of party prejudice, and so much feeling with respect to the distresses of Ireland, that if I could without sacrifice of public duty—if I could by any other species of sacrifice in my power to make—meet his wishes, I should feel the greatest pleasure in complying with them. But since my noble Friend has made the proposition that the present measure should be temporary, and that Her Majesty's Government would afterwards be at liberty to make the measure permanent, I have considered what might be the consequence of that suggestion. We bring forward this proposal in any case with different views to those with which we brought forward the measures which I hope will be read a third time tonight; I mean the measures for the repeal of the corn and navigation laws. With respect to those measures, we say at once it is not our intention, in proposing them, to imply any disturbance of the corn duties or navigation laws, after the termination of the period to which it is proposed the measures shall extend. Whatever other grounds may be put forth, that is our view. Therefore, so far as the interests are concerned with which those Bills interfere, they are merely temporary alterations of the law, and all concerned know that they are temporary. But with regard to the present measure, the situation in which we would be placed, if we were to adopt the course recommended by the noble Lord, would be very different. My right hon. Friend the Chancellor of the Exchequer has stated—and it is the opinion of the Government—that this measure, in all its leading features, should be taken as a permanent measure. If we were to accede to the proposal of the noble Lord, and pass the measure merely for a few months, or for a year, everybody would know that it was done with the intention, not of allowing the law to resume its present shape at the expiration of that period, but with the intention of introducing hereafter—it may be in this Session, or it may be in the next—an alteration in the very principle that the noble Lord has proposed. If we were to postpone the alteration for an entire year, there would be, as it appears to me, very great inconvenience indeed consequent upon such a proposition. There would, for instance, be very great disturbance and uncertainty in trade, and no adequate security to the colonies that their products would be ultimately admitted as now proposed into breweries and distilleries. If we were to bring in the permanent measure—say in the month of April or May—during the present Session, there would exist in the trade, from this time until the arrival of the periods in question, a thousand doubts and rumours—a thousand fears and apprehensions lest when the question was at length introduced, Parliament might perhaps disagree. The evils, therefore, of any such postponement would greatly counterbalance any possible advantage, by creating new causes of insecurity to every trade with which we might interfere. For these reasons I am compelled to adhere to the conclusion that it is better for the Parliament to decide at the present time (though most assuredly with no sort of haste to which the noble Lord can make any objection); but still to decide peremptorily, whether or not this shall be a permanent or a temporary change. It is in the power of the noble Lord at any time he pleases to take the discussion upon this point by proposing the insertion of separate clauses in the Bill, proposing that the enactment shall be but of a temporary duration. If my noble Friend will adopt this course, the sense of the House upon the point can be ascertained with precision; for we are, I believe, on all sides agreed upon this, that the measure should at all events be adopted for a time. If the House should go with the noble Lord in the opinion that it would be better that the measure should be only a temporary one, though I should still hold to my opinion that any such arrangement would be subject to the inconvenience I have stated, still the decision of the House would be against me, and the noble Lord will have carried his point. But if, on the other hand, the House should agree with the Government that the measure ought to be permanent, then I think the question will have been settled in the most satisfactory manner—trade will not be disturbed, and every man who is engaged in mercantile pursuits can make his arrangements for purchasing sugars, for the use of breweries and distilleries, according as his own interests may require. I do not think the question of such a nature that it is likely to produce great excitement throughout the country. No doubt persons connected with the agricultural interests may think that their interests are injuriously affected; but I think that on consideration it will be found that their opinions are not very strongly founded, and that there is no occasion for any very serious apprehensions. At all events, on the point raised by the noble Lord, there can be a deliberate decision by the House; and we can take the time we may think necessary to enable him to bring forward for our consideration all the reasons which induce him to favour a mere temporary duration for the contemplated alteration. I have come to this conclusion with regret; for I am bound to say, with respect to the noble Lord and those who act with him, that I have every reason not only to be satisfied, but to be thankful to them for the disposition they have evinced.

Lord G. BENTINCK assured the House he had no desire to raise an excitement throughout the country upon this question. He accepted the suggestion of his noble Friend, and would be content at some later stage of this measure to take the sense of the House on the question, whether it should be of temporary or of permanent duration. He had no desire to tie up the colonial interests, but when he recollected how month after month they had been tied up last Session, he certainly had not anticipated that the House would exhibit with respect to them any very hot or precipitate haste.

Mr. ESCOTT observed, that the noble Lord the Member for Lynn had dealt largely in political compacts; but he had shown to-night an indiscretion in disclosing a compact which in so experienced a politician struck him as being exceedingly remarkable. The noble Lord the Member for Lynn had declared himself to be the friend of the noble Lord at the head of the Government to a certain time, and only until then. He was the friend and ally of the latter noble Lord until the Irish question was settled (so ran the bond), and until all its difficulties were arranged. When that would be, he (Mr. Escott) did not pretend to foretell. But when that day had arrived, the House was to understand that the two noble Lords were no longer to be in that amicable intercourse which spectators now every night were delighted to witness. But there was another point in the speech of the noble Lord to which he would take the liberty of briefly alluding. With respect to the question before the House, he had made up his mind, that the proper course for the House to pursue was to vote for the remedial measures of the Government, and accept them as the best the Ministers could afford to pass, under the sanction of the noble Lord the Member for Lynn; and after these measures had been carried, let them by and by try to get better if they could. This was the view he took of the question, and for this reason he would not stop to point out what improvements might be introduced into the present measure, but would merely content himself with voting for it. But the noble Lord the Member for Lynn had let out another secret to-night. The farmers, it appeared, were sold again. Had we not been told at all the meetings of farmers held at the close of the last Parliamentary campaign, that a grand measure of compensation was to be awarded to the farmers for the great injury that had been inflicted on them by the abolition of protection? Had we not been told that the excise was to be attacked, and the malt tax repealed? Some scores of dinners had been given throughout the country at which the noble Lord had attended, and at which he held forth these brilliant expectations. Nay, more, he was informed that there was at this moment an Anti-Malt-Tax League, of which he had never been invited to become a member; but of which, he dared say, the noble Lord was the president. But the noble Lord to-night implied that he would sell the farmers again. Exactly as in the last Session he had given them cause to suppose that a battle which was only sham, was carried on there under the pretence of supporting the agricultural interests; so now too, after advancing the great topic of compensation, and fixing their eyes in eager expectancy on it, he now gave it up, and by a side wind admitted that under existing circumstances it would not be exactly prudent to advocate the repeal of the malt tax at all. It was right the farmers should know what was going on, and understand that the great champion of the repeal of the malt tax had shelved the question until he had settled the Irish affairs. After that his apprehensions would be at an end; his hands would be disembarrassed, and he would be quite ready to carry the repeal.

LORD GEORGE BENTINCK said, that whatever compacts he might have made, he would never hesitate to express his anxious hope that the private friendship which existed between the noble Lord at the head of Her Majesty's Government and himself, and which had been of many years duration, might long continue uninterrupted. For his noble Friend's private, personal, and political honour he entertained the highest respect, and for his consistency also; and while he felt sure his noble Friend would give him credit for engaging in no sham battles, he trusted that he would join with him in the expression of a hope that when he was obliged to differ from the noble Lord on high political principles, he might be able to meet him in strong opposition without any interruption of their private friendship. The hon. and learned Gentleman (Mr. Escott) had said that he was at the head of a repeal of the malt-tax league. He would not stop to enter with him into a discussion upon that point; but he would tell the hon. and learned Gentleman, that he might rest in perfect security on the assurance which he now gave him, that whatever league he might belong to, unless he intended that the league at the head of which he might happen to be should be betrayed, he would never invite the hon. and learned Gentleman to become a member of it.

MR. BROTHERTON did not wish to prolong the debate, he merely rose to offer a suggestion to the House. He understood the object of the Government measures was to mitigate the distress of Ireland, by providing food for the people. It was proposed to convert sugar, which might now be considered a necessary of life, into spirits and beer, in order that the barley might be used as food. From returns on the Table of the House, it appeared that 27,000,000 gallons of spirits were annually consumed, being at the rate of one gallon for every man, woman, and child, in the United Kingdom. In addition to which 6,000,000 gallons of wine, and about 400,000,000 gallons of ale, were consumed. Now, the cost of these united, amounted to between 45,000,000*l.* and 50,000,000*l.* sterling. Upwards of forty millions of bushels of malt were charged with duty for home consumption last year. Thus, the produce of two or three millions of acres of land might as well be thrown into the sea, for in his opinion intoxicating liquor produced nothing but poverty, crime, disease, and wretchedness. It was used as an argument for the repeal of the corn law, that if the poor man had to lay out an additional sum in the purchase of food, he had less to expend in clothing and other necessaries. And so it was in this case; if the people spent their wages in drink, they would have less to spare for clothing. The more they expended in articles of manufacture, the better it would be for the home trade. Of 20*s.* expended in spirits, the amount paid for labour was only about 8*d.*; but if 20*s.* were laid out in articles of manufacture, from 6*s.* to 10*s.* went into the pocket of the artisan. Now, if the House would use their moral influence in encouraging abstinence societies, and discontinuing intemperance, they would do more to ameliorate the condition of the people, increase their comforts, and elevate their morals, than by any other measure whatsoever. People were very apt to complain of bad government, but it appeared that they voluntarily taxed themselves to the extent of 50,000,000*l.* sterling.

MR. FERRAND: Sir, I have heard the hon. and learned Member for Winchester, to-night, charge the noble Lord the Member for Lynn with having directly attempted to sell the farmers. At the last general election, the hon. and learned Member marched into Winchester at the head of a grand procession of farmers, pronouncing himself an uncompromising protectionist, ready to fight their battle on the floor of this House, and to die in defence of their interests if necessary. Sir, the hon. Member came to this House, and made a grand speech upon the floor of this House in favour of protection. I assisted the hon. and learned Gentleman to correct that speech, before he circulated it amongst his supporters. [Mr. Escott: No, no, no.] I repeat, I did—I will prove it. I was one day standing in Mr. Ollivier's shop, 59, Pall Mall, when the hon. and learned Member came in. He asked me, "What did you think of my speech the other night?" I told him it was a grand speech—a great piece of oratory—but that I did not know how the Winchester farmers would ever be able to construe his long Latin quotations. He made many alterations in that speech, and that it might create the greater sensation amongst the electors of Winchester, he had it published and circulated at his own expense. I quoted passages from the speech in the spring of the year 1846, as may be in the recollection of many hon. Members around me. It was a most powerful and eloquent speech, and one which the hon. and learned Member would find some difficulty in now answering, But enough of it. I as distinctly charge the hon. Member with selling his constituents, as he has charged the noble Lord with attempting to sell the farmers; and I tell him it is my opinion, that a Member of this House who will sell his constituents, will not hesitate to sell himself.

Mr. ESCOTT would say but a very few words in reply to the remarkable attack that had been made upon him by the hon. Member for Knaresborough, for the position in which he stood in relation to his constituents was a personal matter which on two occasions had been deliberately discussed in the proper place out of doors, and he did not feel himself justified to occupy the attention of the House with it. However, as a serious charge had been made against him, he would deal with it. He felt, and he had never denied it, that the corn-law question was one in respect to which he had pursued such a course as might fully warrant his constituents in pronouncing a judgment adverse to the vote which he had recorded. Feeling this very sensibly, he took two opportunities to meet his constituents in full public meeting, convened by public advertisement. The first meeting was pending the question of the corn law, and before it had been decided by that House; the second meeting was held at the conclusion of the last Session of Parliament, when he entered into a full explanation of his entire conduct. At the first of these meetings, which was a very crowded one, only three of his constituents took exception to his conduct. The rest of the meeting to a man declared their approbation of the course he had pursued. He told them then, and he stated it again at the end of the Session, that if they did not approve of his proceedings, he was ready to resign their representation. The second meeting was even much more numerous than the first; it was, perhaps, the largest that had ever been held in the city of Winchester; and on that occasion his constituents, without a single exception, declared that he had done his duty to them in voting for the measure. Really, after that, he did not think that the noble Lord, or any body else, should accuse him of having betrayed his constituents. ["Oh!"] It was only the hon. Member for Knaresborough who cried "oh!" No other man in the House cried "oh!" but himself. With respect to a certain speech, to which allusion had been made, he wished to have it expressly understood he had never, for the purposes of that speech, or for any other purpose, ever called in the critical assistance of the hon. Member; and if he ever should feel it necessary to correct a speech, the hon. Member would not be the critic to whom he would apply. The hon. Member had talked of his speech in terms of exaggerated eulogy. It was not for him to descant upon the merits of that speech; but he had frequently listened to the hon. Member and some of his Friends, and without wishing to leave himself open to a charge of overweening vanity, he would venture to assert, that if they had studied that composition a little more attentively, their own oratory would not have lost anything.

Resolutions agreed to. To be reported.

POOR LAW COMMISSION—LAW OF SETTLEMENT.

Lord JOHN RUSSELL rose to move—

> "That a Select Committee be appointed, to inquire into the operation of the Law of Settlement, and of the Poor Removal Act of the last Session of Parliament, and to report their observations thereon to the House."

The noble Lord said: The hon. Member for Dorsetshire (Mr. Bankes) has given notice of an Amendment on the Motion which I intend to make for the appointment of a Committee to inquire into the operation of the Law of Settlement; but when he hears the proposition which I am about to make, I think he will feel that that Amendment is unnecessary. I shall propose that a Select Committee be appointed to inquire into the operation of the Law of Settlement, and of the Poor Removal Act of last Session, and to report their observations to the House; and if the hon. and learned Gentleman shall think it necessary, I have no objection to move an instruction to the Committee that they be directed to inquire in the first place into the operation of the Poor Removal Act. I perfectly agree in the observations that numerous complaints have been made as to the Poor Removal Act of last Session; and I think it is desirable that the immediate attention of the Committee should be turned to that subject, with a view to consider what remedy can be proposed. With regard to the Law of Settlement itself, I wish merely to make a single observation, for I consider that the subject is surrounded with difficulties on every side, and I do not think that the House can well come to any opinion on the subject until persons who have much experience with business of this kind, and who are resident in different parts of the country, shall be brought together, and, being brought together, shall have the means of probing all the circumstances of this most important subject. A subject there certainly cannot be of greater importance to the well-being of the labouring classes of the country—in the first place, because the well-being of the labouring classes depends upon the law by which they are to be provided for; and, secondly, upon the condition of residence which the benefit arising from that law is to attach to them. But, Sir, I wish to take this opportunity, as several questions have been asked with regard to the course of the Government with respect to the inquiry that was instituted last year, with respect to the Poor Law Commission itself—I wish, I say, to take this early opportunity of so far satisfying those inquiries as to state what will be in the course of the Session the proposal that will be made by Government on that subject. I can state, perhaps, in the first place, that with regard to those resolutions that were passed by the Committee which sat on the Andover union, it is not the intention of the Government to make any proposition, or take any course on those resolutions, unless some hon. Member should think it fit to make a special Motion on that subject. If any hon. Gentleman shall think it necessary to bring that subject before the House, I shall have no difficulty—having looked generally to the evidence and to the resolutions—of stating my opinion with regard to the results which are to be drawn from that inquiry. But, Sir, we have looked rather to the more general question—I mean the question as to what ought to be the course adopted with respect to the renewal of the Poor Law Commission. The House is aware, that according to the last Act passed on the subject, the powers of the Commissioners are continued to the end of this Session, and then to the end of the next Session of Parliament; but, as a measure of prudence, it ought to be our course to propose either the renewal of the Commission, or to make some other proposition in the course of the present Session, to prevent any accident that might arise from there being an end of the Commission before any law could be passed on the subject. Now, Sir, on considering the nature of that Commission, I must say that I think, in the first place, it is absolutely necessary to have some body which shall have a central control, and which shall likewise have the means of local inspection. My opinion is this: that whether under that system which formerly existed (and which will probably never revive), or whether under the system that has been established by the Poor Law Amendment Act, it is most advisable that the abuses, that the oppression, that the neglect and maladministration of the law which take place in particular districts should be examined, should be corrected, should be exposed; and that cannot be so well done as by means of some central control, and by means of those who have that central power. But, Sir, with regard to the manner in which that control is to be exercised, I certainly have observed that of late years there has been the greatest difficulty in exercising that control effectually, and in a manner to the satisfaction of this House and of the country. It has so happened—I confess it is a result which I did not expect at the time the Poor Law Amendment Act passed, but it has so happened—that the management and administration of that law have been continually the subject of animadversion and inquiry in this House, and that many complaints have been made with regard to the conduct of boards of guardians and of assistant commissioners, and with regard to the conduct of the Commissioners themselves, in superintending and correcting those defects. And now, for my part, it may be partiality, but my belief is, that those Commissioners have exercised their powers to the best of their judgment, and with an earnest desire to serve the poor of this country. My belief too is, that their general administration of the law has been correct and sound; but I cannot say that in every instance that has been brought before Parliament, there has been a satisfactory conviction on the minds of Parliament that their discretion has been always wisely exercised. I think that the consequences have arisen very much because, though the control is placed in the hands of the Commissioners, the explanations respecting the exercise of that control, and the defence of that control, is placed in different hands. One set of officers had to examine into the particular cases that were complained of; they had to receive reports, to examine the various circumstances, and to come—according to the best of their knowledge—to a decision upon them. And the Minister of the Crown had, when explanation was required, to state to the House what were the difficulties of the Commissioners—what were the reasons that induced them to come to the decision that had been adopted; and, finally, either to defend the conduct of the Commissioners, or to decline to defend it; and thus put an end at once to all trust and confidence on the part of the public in their administration of the law. I own I think that this has been proved to be a very unsatisfactory mode of administration. I think the Secretary of State must very often have felt it to be so; and must have wished to be in a position in which he would have had an opportunity of knowing all the case, and be enabled to inform his mind on the decision that had been given, before he was called upon to defend that decision in the House. I think that the Commissioners, on their part, whatever the statement of the Secretary of State may have been, must often have been anxious to explain particular circumstances which, when stated by a Member of the House, may not have been within the knowledge of the Secretary of State who was explaining their conduct. I think when so much inquiry takes place, with so much necessity for full explanation, it is desirable that the persons in whom this great control is placed should be persons more immediately connected with the House of Parliament. We have therefore, Sir, formed the opinion, that for the better administration of the Poor Law Amendment Act, it is advisable that the superior Board should be constituted in a different manner; and the manner in which we propose to constitute it is this—that there shall be one person at the head of the board, who shall be styled the President of that Board, and who shall be able to sit in the House of Commons—that he shall have placed with him certain persons holding Ministerial offices, but not interfering in the ordinary administration of that law, any more than the Secretary of State interferes in the ordinary concerns of my right hon. Friend the President of the Board of Control. My right hon. Friend is President of the Board of Control, with certain other great officers associated with him; and with respect to certain very important questions, they are made aware of the course which he proposes to take; but in all ordinary cases the administration of the office devolves upon him alone. I would propose, that there should be two Secretaries appointed, one of whom should be enabled to sit in the House of Commons, while the other—according to the ordinary course—would not have a seat in that House. If it should be the case that the President of the Board had not a seat in this House, then one of the Secretaries could have a seat in it; and, therefore, be able in this House to explain and defend the conduct of the department to which he belongs. I wish now only to state the general outline of the scheme. With respect to the general rules, as they are called, I would propose that those general rules which have been adopted by the authority of the present Commissioners —having been finally revised—should remain in force, until, by some competent authority, they should be abrogated, and new general orders should be put in their place. That authority, to do so, should be vested, in the first place, in the new Board, who should have power to frame any new rules; but that those rules should not have any power or effect until sanctioned by the Queen in Council. This, Sir, is the general outline of the measures we propose to adopt for the future administration of the Poor Law. I should state also, that we propose to separate entirely the administration of the law in Ireland, from the administration of the law in England. We propose that there should be there likewise a President of the Board; that the Chief Secretary and the Under Secretary of the Lord Lieutenant, and another officer of the Government, should be associated with him; and that the Lord Lieutenant in Council should make general rules in the same manner as the Queen in Council. Therefore, the administration of the law in England would be entirely separate from the administration of the law in Ireland. I know not whether it will be necessary for me to make any further statement as to the plan we propose. It has been already embodied in a Bill, not yet fully matured, but which when prepared will be laid before Parliament; and if it should receive the sanction of Parliament, I think—at least I hope so—that the administration of the poor law may be rendered more satisfactory; and when any inquiry is made in the House respecting the administration of the poor law, that inquiry, and the defence or explanation which it may call forth, may be drawn into immediate contact; and so important a concern as the general administration of the Poor Law shall be brought under the immediate control of Parliament. I think there is nothing further for me to state on this subject. As I have said already, if any hon. Gentleman shall think it necessary to make any Motion respecting the previous inquiry—as to the Andover union—I shall be ready to state my opinion; and I shall not shrink from any odium which may fall upon me for defending the Poor Law Commissioners, when I think their conduct was proper, and that they have been unjustly attacked.

MR. BANKES said: If I had followed my own inclination I should have undoubtedly proposed the total and immediate repeal of the Poor Law Removal Act, which has occasioned so much abuse; and, as I believe in many parts of England all proceedings have been suspended because the Act is impracticable, I think its total repeal would be the best settlement of the questions it has raised. But when I recollect, at the same time, that the Act was sanctioned by two Attorneys General and two Solicitors General, and that it was the production of two separate Ministries, I could hardly hope at once to have carried its repeal; I shall, therefore, best consult the interests of the poor by consenting to the proposition of the noble Lord, with the understanding that permission shall be given to the Committee to take the Removal Bill first into consideration, and to report separately upon it. I am ready, therefore, to concede to the Motion of the noble Lord. I have, however, been furnished to-day, as I naturally expected to find that I should be, with complaints from all parts of the country; and as the most important come from the constituents of the noble Lord, the citizens of the London union, and as I think the resolutions the board have come to redound so much to their honour and credit, I must read them to the House. These are their words: they say—

"In our opinion the board of guardians is not generally called upon to interfere in matters of settlement for particular parishes; but in a case like the present, which is to regulate the treatment of a large class of paupers belonging to one of the parishes of this union, your committee think it right that the board of guardians should state the general principle upon which they are disposed to act with reference to the recent statute. Your committee find that on the construction of the Act there exist the most opposite and conflicting opinions, whereby the practice of the several unions throughout the country has assumed an inconvenient diversity highly detrimental to the interests of the poor. Your committee find that while many of the unions and parishes are acting with large and liberal views, there are too many which have taken advantage of the uncertainty of the Act to relieve themselves from their just burdens, and cast them upon the parishes or unions where their poor, out of humanity, have been allowed to reside; and in this view of the Act they are supported by the legal opinion of the Attorney and Solicitor Generals, and other learned persons. Your committee, however, are under a strong impression that the said Act was intended as a boon to the poor, and that the Legislature, in passing it, never contemplated that existing, ascertained and acknowledged settlements should be practically defeated, or that the relations between the aged, infirm, and helpless poor and their respective parishes should be annihilated. We are of opinion, moreover, that the sudden withdrawal of relief from the non-resident poor, many of whom are totally helpless and verging towards the grave, would be attended with inconceivable hardship and cruelty, by driving them to make out a new case before new and unknown masters, and perhaps subjecting them in their last years to a workhouse or an entirely different system of relief. Your committee think such a practice so manifestly unjust towards the poor, that we strongly urge upon the board of guardians the propriety of continuing their relief as hitherto to those non-resident poor whose claims have been already made out and acknowledged, until a proper legal construction shall have been given to the said Act of Parliament. Your committee, however, confine this recommendation to old and existing settled claims, leaving the several parishes of the union to take such course as they may deem advisable with regard to new claimants. Your committee believe that this union has a larger number of non-resident poor than any union in the kingdom; and your committee are aware that, by acting in accordance with the opinions of the Attorney and Solicitor Generals, this union might throw off the burden not only of their poor resident in the country, but also of the great majority of their out-door poor resident in London. They, nevertheless, think that, as such a determination would be inconsistent with those humane principles upon which the board of guardians of the city of London union have always endeavoured to act, they ought not, unless upon a clear and express direction of an Act of Parliament, to adopt it. Your committee think that, should you agree with us in your recommendations, notice of your intention should be immediately given to those unions wherein your out-door poor are resident. With respect to the poor of other parishes or unions resident in this union, and whose relief has been withdrawn, your committee recommend that the places to which they belong should be apprised of the principles upon which you are resolved to act, in the hope that their relief may be restored; but, in case of an unsuccessful appeal to such places, and as long as the necessity lasts, your committee advise a continuance to such persons of their accustomed relief at the expense of this union, being disposed to recommend an increase of your burdens rather than that any poor and helpless creature should be deprived of the means of support."

I have read this document for the purpose of showing how pressingly the question calls for a speedy determination. It appears that unions have been under the necessity of agreeing to consider the law as suspended, and that those unions which have not acted benevolently are at the present moment reaping the advantage of the benevolence of other unions. Under these circumstances I hope that an early opportunity of considering the provisions of the Act will be given, and that the Committee will make its report thereupon with as little delay as possible. With regard to the proposal of the noble Lord for a reconstruction of the central poor-law jurisdiction, it is my belief that this proposal will meet with very general satisfaction; because I am convinced that it has long been felt that the poor ought to have their representative in this House. I trust that persons competent in all respects to discharge with diligence and discretion the duties which would be imposed upon them, will be selected under the new arrangement; and the country at large will then, I feel satisfied, witness with gratification the proposed measures.

Mr. HUME had heard with very great satisfaction that Her Majesty's Government had determined to change the present constitution of poor-law jurisdiction. No man in that House, from the commencement of the present system, had been more anxious for its success; and when he became a member of the Committee of the last Session, which inquired into certain allegations against the Poor Law Commissioners, he was quite in favour of them, because they had obtained his confidence. But when their conduct was brought before the Committee, even upon the evidence of the Commissioners themselves, it appeared that the Act under which they were appointed, and their own rules and regulations, had been violated by themselves. They had themselves disregarded the law, and it was no wonder there should be that diversity of practice in different unions to which the hon. Gentleman (Mr. Bankes) referred, when it was found that individual members of the Commission acted upon their own responsibility in individual cases, when the Act required that no business should be done except by the united board. It had been his intention to give notice of a Motion for an Address to the Crown to dismiss those Commissioners; but after what had fallen from the noble Lord, he should not persist in that Motion. He was anxious to see a sound, and proper, and humane system of poor law in this country, for there was nothing of so much importance; and he would guard those hon. Gentlemen who wished to put an end at once to the present system, against the results with which we might be visited, if we were without a proper establishment for the poor, should such a calamity as that which now prevailed in Ireland ever fall on England. But at the same time men must be appointed in its administration, who had the confidence of the public. The present Commissioners had lost the confidence of the public. He did not attribute improper intentions to them; but it was a great misfortune that a law which was looked upon as the means of regenerating the population of the whole country, should have been so administered that a general dislike to it had been created: it would require the greatest possible care and good management to prevent matters from returning to their previous state. He had a perfect recollection of the grievous evils of the old system: nothing, in his opinion, could be worse than a return to those evils; and for this reason he was anxious that a better system should prevail. But as a matter of general observation, he could only say that, if he found any board, no matter what it was, or any governor or magistrate, at variance with the men with whom it had to deal, and at variance with the bulk of the community, he should set it down that the fault must be with the individual, and not with everybody else. This had been the case in this instance, and he rejoiced in the hope of an early change; but he begged to suggest to the noble Lord that, to carry out the important duties of this Act, there were required no ordinary talents, no ordinary attention, and that the selection must be made more for talent than for rank; that the selection must be one which would invite confidence on the part of the public, in order to secure a willing and cordial co-operation on the part of the unions throughout the country. He had known some of the Commissioners for many years, and he regretted what had occurred; but he should have betrayed his own feelings if he had not taken the course which he had. He was satisfied, from the statement of the noble Lord, that the object of the Committee of last Session, upon which he had been put accidentally, had been obtained. The responsibility of selection would now rest upon the noble Lord, and it was probably one of the most important duties that ever devolved upon a Minister. As to the proposition that the heads of the new board should have a seat in that House, he confessed that, in the first instance, this had not been his opinion; but time had since pointed out to him the necessity there was for having some individual in the House capable at once of answering upon the spot. The Secretary of State, and every other man in office, had so much of their own business to attend to in that House, that they must have been placed in an awkward situation when called upon to explain matters with which they had no concern; and if the right hon. Baronet opposite (Sir James Graham) would speak candidly, he had not the least doubt the right hon. Baronet would say he had often been obliged to offer excuses which he regretted. A public officer, situated like the Home Secretary, was bound to believe officers in inferior situations until he was convinced of the contrary; and he had heard excuses made, which, to his own knowledge, were incorrect. No public officer ought to be placed in this situation. The hon. Member, in conclusion, repeated that he should not follow up the notice which he had given, but he hoped Her Majesty's Government would speedily bring before the House the changes they contemplated.

MR. VERNON SMITH said, he believed the question before the House was, that a Select Committee be appointed to inquire into the Law of Settlement and the Poor Removal Act of last Session; but upon the subject of those Acts he had heard scarcely a single observation even from the noble Lord who brought forward the Motion. With regard to that part of the Motion which referred to submitting the question of the Poor Removal Act to a Committee, he heartily rejoiced that it should be submitted to such a tribunal, as he knew they would find out what had been discovered during the recess—that a more objectionable measure had never been passed. But the noble Lord had proposed a Committee to inquire into the operation of the law of settlement, without giving a single reason for that Committee, or indicating the course he meant to pursue in that Committee. He thought that this subject ought to be taken up by Government, instead of being submitted to a Committee, the only result of which would be delay. So much had been already said and written on the question, it was so accurately known by most hon. Members, that there was nothing more to inquire into. In fact, he believed that every hon. Member was better acquainted with it than with any other subject. In his opinion, therefore, it would have been better if the noble Lord had proposed a Bill of his own, which he might afterwards, if he had considered it requisite, have submitted to a Committee up-stairs. He had an impression that last year the right hon. Gentleman the Secretary of State for the Home Department said, he would not throw the question loose before the Committee; but if he did submit it to a Committee, he would indicate the course he meant to pursue. There had been repeatedly Bills on this question before the House. The right hon. Gentleman whom he saw opposite (Sir J. Graham) had taken the greatest pains with it; he had submitted several Bills upon it to the House, and all that was material for a Committee to go over was then discussed. The right hon. Gentleman proposed, he believed, an union settlement and an union rate; and from the opinion then expressed by his right hon. Friends below him, he supposed that they were of opinion, as he was, that an union settlement would perhaps be the best. He thought that the poor labourer had a right, in this country, to seek employment where he pleased; but the present state of the law controlled him in a manner most prejudicial to his interest; it cramped his energies, and destroyed his independence; whatever talent he possessed, there was nothing to call it forth. The first question put to a man when he asked for employment was, to what parish he belonged, and to that parish he was confined. That subject had attracted the attention of the Committee of the House of Lords. He himself believed there was no greater misfortune to the poor of this country than was put upon them by the law of settlement, and he should be glad to see it done away with. Such a course would not render necessary a national rate. Local rates might be maintained, and an union rate adopted, if they pleased; although his own opinion was, that the poor man should have no settlement, but should be entitled to relief in the parish in which he required it. But he wished to ask his right hon. Friend the Secretary for the Home Department, whether he meant to allow the Committee to go into that question—he meant the question of rating; because without it they could not properly consider the question of settlement. He thought the right hon. Gentleman ought to tell them what course he meant to pursue, because if he intended to throw this question loose before the Committee, to take up any time they pleased, and to call such persons as they thought proper, all he could expect from such a Committee would be an indefinite protraction of this question. The Poor Law Commissioners, although they were said to be *in extremis*, would be called up by the hon. Member for Knaresborough to make their dying confession. Every species of examination connected with the poor law would be entered into, as, no doubt, the hon. Member for Knaresborough would be anxious to do; but what would be the consequence as to that law which was considered by so many persons to be prejudicial to the poor of this country? It would be impossible for the Committee to make their Report before the close of the Session—probably the last Session of the present Parliament; and when a new Parliament came, they would throw aside the labours of the former Committee, a new Committee would be required, and thus the subject would be protracted through another year; the law would have to be acted upon by the magistrates, and the greatest confusion caused among the poor of this country. An instance of that occurred in the Report of the Committee moved for by the hon. Member for Durham in 1845, on the Game Laws. That Committee sat two years, and then produced twenty-four resolutions contrary to the opinion of the hon. Gentleman himself, and such that they might have been written off-hand by any gentleman who sat down and considered the subject. Those laws were still in operation, and for two years the magistrates had had to administer them against popular feeling. He believed that the consequences of this Committee would lead to a protraction of that measure which they all wished to see carried into execution, and that too relating to the subject upon which they had had more discussion and possessed more information than upon almost any other.

Sir J. PAKINGTON wished to express the gratification he felt at the proposal of the noble Lord, and also for his moderation and fairness towards the Commissioners. He entirely concurred with the noble Lord, that in order to avoid a recurrence of the evils of the old poor law, the administration of that law should be intrusted to some central authority. On the other hand, he agreed that it was most desirable that that central authority should be directly responsible to Parliament, and that some member of the Commission should be a Member of that House. He was extremely glad to hear the proposal of the noble Lord; and he believed, that with every one who had given attention to this most important subject, it would receive universal approbation. The noble Lord had alluded to the Committee that sat last year on the Andover union. He believed that the Report of that Committee had exercised considerable influence with regard to the poor law both within and without that House. He was a member of that Committee; he paid great attention to its proceedings; and he was bound to say, that some of the resolutions at which that Committee arrived, were, in his judgment, harsh and uncalled-for towards the Poor Law Commissioners. On the other hand, resolutions were passed to which he was obliged to give his concurrence, finding fault with the manner in which the Commissioners had exercised the discretion placed in them. At the same time he was bound to say, that he most entirely agreed with what the noble Lord had said, that the Poor Law Commissioners had, he believed, acted with the best possible intentions, and, for the most part, with sound discretion. As to the appointment of a Committee on the subject of settlement, he did not agree with the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Northampton (Mr. V. Smith). He was extremely glad that the noble Lord proposed such a Committee. It was a question surrounded with great difficulty; and he confessed that, having given a good deal of time to its consideration, he was of opinion that they ought to approach as nearly as they could to a repeal of that law altogether. He was confident that the result of that Committee must be a very great modification of a law, which, in his judgment, had tended, beyond almost any other, to inflict hardship on the labouring classes of this country. As to the Poor Removal Act of last Session, he could not agree with the hon. Member for Dorsetshire, or the hon. Member for Northampton, in the condemnation they had passed upon that Act. He had given it great attention in his own neighbourhood, and there no difficulty had occurred—no hardship had been inflicted on the poor. On the contrary, he believed it had conferred very great benefit upon them by exempting them from the suffering of removal; and though he was very glad that the working of that Act should be referred to a Select Committee, yet he hoped that neither the Committee nor that House would be disposed to sanction a departure from the principle of it; for he was satisfied that the hardship of removal had been mitigated since its operation, and that no industrial residence, for some time exempting the poor from removal, had been beneficial.

SIR G. GREY begged to offer a very few words upon the subject, in consequence of the appeal made to him by his right hon. Friend (Mr. V. Smith). He should have thought that the Parliamentary experience of his right hon. Friend would have prevented his asking him what course the Committee would adopt. He should only be an individual member of the Committee, and could not prescribe to it any particular course of proceeding; but he should certainly not recommend that each member should call what witnesses he pleased, and thus protract the inquiry to an indefinite period. The only pledge he could give would be, that he should move that it should be an instruction to the Committee to inquire first into the operation of the Poor Removal Act, as it affected the condition of the poor, and that they should report specially thereon to the House. Complaints having been made as to the operation of that law, it would be desirable that some opinion should be expressed by the Committee as to its operation. He had heard it very generally condemned by Members of that House; but he must say, that he was inclined to agree with the opinion expressed by the hon. Member for Droitwich, that its general operation was favourable to the interests of the poor. He quite admitted, however, that a sufficient case had been made out to call for an inquiry. His right hon. Friend had objected to the question as to the law of settlement being referred to a Committee, and had said, that it would be easy to deal with the question, if a Bill was at once brought in, and had referred as a proof of this to the three Bills upon the subject which had in previous Sessions been introduced by the right hon. Gentleman opposite; but the fate of these Bills, notwithstanding the care taken in their preparation, showed how much difference of opinion existed with regard to it, and how difficult a subject it was to deal with. All parties, indeed, concurred in the opinion that evils arose out of the present condition of the law; but they were not agreed as to the remedy. He thought it clearly the best plan to refer it to the consideration of a Committee, for the purpose of receiving evidence on various points connected with it; and he hoped that the difficulties that stood in the way of a solution of the question, would be diminished by this course, which appeared to him to hold out a more reasonable hope of success than any other. In reply to the anxiety expressed by his right hon. Friend, that he (Sir G. Grey) should state his own opinion to the House, he should only say, that when the proper time should arrive, he should be prepared to state it. He should be prepared to state in the Committee his general view upon the question, though he could not say that he could see his way clearly as yet through all the difficulties which belonged to it. There was one question asked by his right hon. Friend, to which he should briefly reply. It was whether the question of rating would be considered, as well as the law of settlement; or whether it would be excluded from the consideration of the Committee? In his opinion it was impossible to consider the law of settlement without taking into consideration the law of rating. The law of settlement, in fact, was closely connected with the law of rating; and the real difficulties involved in the question of settlement arose from the questions as to rating. He hoped he had so far answered satisfactorily the questions put to him. There seemed to be a general concurrence of opinion in all parts of the House as to the appointment of the Committee; and he should not therefore trespass further upon their attention.

MR. FERRAND: When I heard the answer given by the hon. Member for Montrose to the speeches made this evening, I confess I almost believed that it was the late Secretary of State for the Home

Department who was then addressing the House. But no matter for that; what I want to know is this—does the right hon. Baronet suppose—does the noble Lord at the head of the Government suppose—that the people of this country will be satisfied with the arrangement which they have now proposed to make? I ask this also,—does the hon. Member for Montrose imagine that he has done his duty in withdrawing the Resolutions which he had placed upon the Notice-book of this House? Does any man suppose that the people of England will be satisfied with seeing the present Government coalescing with the Members of the late Government in rescuing the Poor Law Commissioners from that punishment which they had inflicted upon their own subordinates in the year 1846? Do you suppose that the people of this country have forgotten the case of Mr. Day and the case of Mr. Parker? I tell the noble Lord that when it becomes known, as it will in a few days, that you have determined to shelter the Poor Law Commissioners, not because they are men of talent, but because they are connected with persons high in party, I warn the Government that the people of this country will speak more plainly than they ever yet have done, if this House do not perform their duty. If that Committee which you proposed and appointed neglected to perform their duty, are you to come down to the House of Commons in the hope that a majority supporting you will enable you to rescue your favoured Commissioners from the punishment which they merit, and with which the people of England desire they should be visited? I tell the hon. Member for Montrose, that though he may withdraw his Motion, I shall take the earliest opportunity of giving notice that on Thursday next I intend to move that a Committee of this House be appointed to inquire into the conduct of the Poor Law Commissioners, and to report upon the manner in which the poor law has been administered. I challenge you to an investigation of what has been their conduct for the last twelve years. I have endeavoured to expose that conduct, and for having done so, I have been persecuted with a malignity which was disgraceful to the men that made themselves parties to that persecution. I hope those who rendered themselves my adversaries will not shrink from a fair discussion of these questions, and that they will meet me in a court of law, where I may expect to have an opportunity of vindicating my character. I ask the House, is it not just to the poor that we should have this inquiry? I ask, how many of the poor have been sacrificed? I ask how many have met death by starvation, and how many have been otherwise destroyed by the operation of this Act? I ask how many thousand homes have you laid waste, and how often has the poor man's furniture been dragged from his house, and sold? How many villages have become desolate wildernesses? And will you, who have been accessary to this, aggravate your offences by screening the principal agents of these enormities? I ask you, do you suppose the people of England will be satisfied by such a measure as you now propose? I ask you, after this, will you dare to face your constituents at a general election? Yet you need not have feared to face your constituents, if you had not provoked their hostility by endeavouring to screen the Poor Law Commissioners. Go anywhere—go into any company—and you will find but one feeling, of disgust, against the Poor Law Commissioners. In the month of August last, the House of Commons published the evidence that was taken before the Committee appointed to inquire into the case of the Andover union. I published two letters in *The Times* newspaper in reference to the proceedings of that Committee. Mr. Lewis thought proper to commence legal proceedings against me on account of the language used in those letters. On the 24th of November, the rule for a criminal information against me was made absolute. That occurrence took place two months ago. Three or four days after the rule was made absolute, a public meeting was held at Leeds, which I attended, and at which I challenged Mr. Lewis and the late Secretary of State for the Home Department to lose not a moment in bringing those legal proceedings to a speedy and a final issue. I challenged them, and, up to this time, they have shrunk from meeting me. Under these circumstances, I considered it my duty to give notice that I should move for returns of the number of times the Bingley poorhouse in the Keighley union was visited, and for other documents connected with that case; and I am happy to say that the Secretary of State for the Home Department in the handsomest manner agreed to the production of those papers. I moved for those returns only last night; and when they are made, they will prove that the Poor Law Commissioners have been guilty of a gross dereliction of duty, and have committed a fraud upon this House. Sir, I have now to inform this House that to-day, at two o'clock, my solicitor placed in my hands a letter which he had received from Mr. Lewis's solicitors, stating that they had this very day filed a criminal information against me. I cannot but look upon this, Sir, as an attempt to intimidate me in the discharge of my duty as a Member of this House. There was time a month ago to have brought this trial to an issue; but they have held back these proceedings until I appeared within the walls of this House, determined fairly and fearlessly to perform my duty. I demanded at Leeds that these parties should not lose one hour in going before a jury. Would it not have been fair, manly, and honourable, if, instead of dealing with the question piecemeal in this way, they had met me at once, face to face, in a court of justice? I challenge them to such a proceeding; and, if I do not come from the trial unstained, I will resign my seat within these walls. And if they do not come forth from a searching investigation with the same honour, I dare them to act on my precept.

MR. ETWALL expressed his surprise that Lord John Russell had not taken some steps in consequence of the Report of the Committee on the Andover union. As an individual member of that Committee, he felt he should not be doing his duty to the labourers of the Andover union, and, indeed, to the poor of England generally, if he did not remind the House of the nature of the evidence taken before that Committee; because he felt assured that in other unions the poor were being treated with equal harshness, and with a severity that he was sure must be most repugnant to the feelings of that House. He should best consult the present hour of the night by simply stating, that he should take an early opportunity of bringing the Report of the Committee on the Andover union before the House.

COLONEL SIBTHORP said, he was glad there was a chance at last of getting rid of the Poor Law Commissioners, whom he had always declared to be an useless, expensive, and oppressive body of men.

CAPTAIN PECHELL said, that although the announcement of the noble Lord was very agreeable in many respects, yet he felt disappointed that the noble Lord had not adopted some more summary proceeding against the Poor Law Commissioners. It was impossible that the public could be satisfied with the lenient treatment of these persons, when they remembered their sentences of dismissal against Mr. Parker and Mr. Day, and the report which a Committee of that House had passed upon their conduct. As a member of that Committee it would be satisfactory to him to know that some steps would be taken upon it forthwith. The report of the proposed Committee and the proposed measures, could not be made soon enough to rescue the poor from their present position as speedily as was desirable.

SIR W. JOLLIFFE said, that the greatest suspense and confusion had existed in almost every union in the country, since the opinion of the law officers had been taken upon the Poor Removal Act. He had in his hand the copy of a letter addressed by the clerk of the Hackney union to the officer of another union; in which it was stated that the Hackney union were obliged to relieve some hundreds of persons who did not belong to them, in consequence of the confusion and uncertainty arising from the late Poor Removal Act. He had heard similar statements from several boards of guardians during the recess. For his own part, he did not believe that submitting that Act to the consideration of a Committee would produce the effect which the country expected and desired; but he thought the best course would be to bring in a Bill to repeal the present law, or to make such alterations in it as would render its working satisfactory.

MR. RICE said, that people throughout the country were generally greatly dissatisfied with the operation of the Poor Removal Act; they were waiting for legislation on the subject, and their opinion of the present law was that it was so bad it could not last, and that it ought to be altered immediately. The hon. Member for Droitwich had said that, in his neighbourhood, that Act had operated beneficially for the poor; but that hon. Gentleman was the only person he knew who had any practical acquaintance with the working of the law, who did not say that it had been attended with the greatest harshness and inconvenience—with the greatest oppression to the poor, and the greatest injustice to the ratepayers. In his neighbourhood the parishes had, under the Poor Removal Act, been saddled with the relief of persons whom they never expected to be called upon to support. He did not think that it would be advisable, however, to repeal that Act; he believed that its objects were most humane; but what was wanted was, such a modification of the law of settlement as would combine kindness to the poor with justice to the ratepayers. He considered that the best plan would be, the adoption of union settlements; for he believed that the old parochial system had greatly retarded improvement in the character of the poor. He hoped the right hon. Baronet, who, he believed, had every disposition to prevent delay, would do all in his power to induce the Committee to make an early report. He hoped that, if possible, the report would be delivered before Easter, in order that some measure might be submitted to the House for its consideration during the recess.

Mr. FIELDEN said, if he had understood the noble Lord aright, he (Lord J. Russell) admitted that the scheme of centralization had proved a failure, and yet he proposed to continue the same system. He considered that the new poor law was most oppressive in its provisions, and had been carried out in the most harsh and oppressive manner; and he was ready to prove this whenever a proper occasion was afforded of doing so. He had not heard of a single place in which the operation of the new poor law had given satisfaction.

Mr. T. DUNCOMBE was sorry to hear from the Government that there was an intention to allow this Committee to waste any of its time in inquiring, in the first place, into the Removal Act of last Session, because it appeared to him that an inquiry into the law of settlement naturally involved the question of removals. They were told that the Act of last Session, which was passed with the most humane and benevolent objects on the part of that House, and of which he had been a most strenuous advocate, worked ill for the poor. He had no doubt that might be the case in some instances, but only in cases where those whose duty it was to administer the law, did not think proper to administer it honestly. He had found in some places—for instance, in Yorkshire—that the magistrates were in fault with regard to the administration of this law. The Act was passed with a view to relieve the manufacturing rather than the agricultural population; it was intended for the benefit of those individuals who, after wasting their health and strength in manufacturing towns for ten, fifteen, twenty, aye, or thirty-five years, were subject to removal, and were removed, from those towns to their places of settlement. When the Poor Removal Act was first proposed, no one seemed apparently so much in its favour as the country gentlemen, and those gentlemen who represented the rural districts. He thought it due to say, that there was not a complaint from one of the manufacturing towns with reference to that Act; all the complaints of its operation, with the exception of that from Brighton, proceeded from small rural villages. ["No, no!"] They would find that this was the fact. In the district with which the hon. Member for Knaresborough (Mr. Ferrand) was connected, the magistrates said they could not understand the Act. They often found that the intellects of gentlemen, as well as of parishes, were very obtuse, when their breeches pockets were concerned. He thought the statements of the hon. Member for Brighton showed the necessity of an alteration in the law of settlement, and he wished the Government would allow the Committee to go at once *in medias res* with reference to this question of settlement. An hon. Member had asked how the poor were to be maintained if they abolished the system of settlement? He would reply, that they ought to be supported by a national charge upon the general taxation of the country. It appeared from the statement of the noble Lord (Lord J. Russell) that they were now to have a Poor Law Minister, and a Poor Law Secretary, both of whom were to have seats in that House. He would suggest whether it were not advisable that those persons should hold their seats *ex officio;* for he believed that before a Poor Law Minister was able to obtain a seat in that House, except for some of their rotten boroughs, the new poor law must be made much more popular than it was at that moment. He wished the Committee for which the noble Lord had moved were authorized to carry their investigations somewhat further than the noble Lord proposed, for he would like to see them inquiring what amendments could be made in the new poor law which might render it more acceptable to the people of this country. It appeared to him that one improvement needed in the present law was, that some appeal should be afforded to the poor man when relief was refused him. The hon. Member for Knaresborough complained the other evening of the auditors; but it would often be found that when the *ex officio* guardians did not look after their affairs, the others, and particularly the small farmers, were the most grinding for the poor. Occasionally the boards of guardians were composed of most humane men; but that was generally when the *ex officio* guardians took pains, and looked after the small farmers; but where the latter were left to themselves, the poor would be found constantly complaining against the law. When a party asked for relief, the guardians, in refusing it, turned the blame on the auditor, who, on his part, frequently said, that the guardians did not give him a chance of refusing it; but the poor man had no redress, and no power to get relief. Though the guardians were elected, the qualification for voters was not sufficiently low, and the poor themselves ought to have some voice in their election. He would give to the poor man an appeal against the decision of the guardians to the magistrates in petty sessions; and when an auditor disallowed any item granted by the guardians, he would, in order to take all excuse from them, give them an appeal against the decision of the auditor to the quarter-sessions. Then there could be no fair ground of complaint. He believed that one chief ground of complaint against the poor law was, that the poor man had no appeal, and could get no redress. On a future occasion he should see the Bill that would be brought in to increase the patronage of the Crown by the introduction of two new official Members in that House. Already one new officer connected with railways had been introduced into the House, though he thought that the railway interest had been well represented before. Now it was proposed to introduce a Poor Law President and Secretary, for no other purpose he could imagine, but to be badgered. What these officers were to receive out of the public taxes for this badgering, he did not know; but if it was thought necessary to give them seats in the House, why not go a little further, and introduce also the heads of the Excise department, and all other departments, including the Chairman of the Board of Customs, who did not always give satisfaction? He, for one, could not at all commit himself to the approval of the introduction of these two gentlemen, connected with the poor law, into that House, holding places under the Crown, until by seeing the Bill he knew more about the matter; but, as far as he could understand at present, he thought the public would consider it rather an expensive and unsatisfactory job.

Sir T. D. ACLAND said, that although he must express his satisfaction at his noble Friend's statement, yet the point which pressed more particularly upon his mind in respect to this subject, was the necessity of an immediate remedy for the litigation that was going on, not only in the courts of law, but also in every parish and in every board of guardians. The whole effect of the law should be to secure industrial labour to the poor. With regard to the old law, there was a retrospective action given to it, which entailed the greatest mischief, and was the real cause of all the difficulty that had arisen. He should like to see the Committee preparing a Bill of this character, under proper guidance and proper instruction, the great object of which would be to recall the retrospective action of the old law as soon as they could. When they did that, they would enjoy peace. He hoped that the union settlement principle would be adopted, and that a provision would be enacted against the removal of the poor from the places where they had long lived by their industry; but which, by the present operation of the law, was left entirely uncertain.

Mr. GRIMSDITCH could speak, from his own observation, of the evil operation of the law. He had seen hundreds of poor persons cast without resource upon the wide world. In Manchester, particularly, the mode in which the law had been administered, had created much confusion. In many instances, it had led to absolute cruelties. He congratulated the House and the country on the prospect of their also getting rid, very soon, of the mischievous machinery of the existing poor law. He rejoiced to see that the days of the existence of the irresponsible Commissioners were numbered; and, for his part, if they must have a central supervision, he would rather that it should be under the control of the Crown. He had urged this on sucessive Secretaries of State; but until now the notion had been scouted. He hoped that they would soon come back to the practical working of the wise and humane Act of Elizabeth. But if the existing poor law was to be re-enacted — and that could not be without creating anew the dissatisfaction felt towards it by all classes—he hoped that the general orders issued by the Commissioners since 1836 might, in a simplified form, be incorporated in the Act.

Mr. BROTHERTON reminded the House that at the time the Poor Removal

Bill was passed, hon. Members taunted the representatives of the manufacturing districts by alleging, that so soon as the corn laws were repealed, the manufacturers would insist upon the Removal Bill sharing the same fate. Nothing of the kind, however, had been attempted. He considered the removal law of last year a humane measure, to a certain extent, particularly as regarded large towns, such as Manchester, where great numbers of Irish and Scotch were located. The law had prevented such persons from being removed, when circumstances compelled them to apply for relief. He admitted that, in many cases, the law had been carried out with greater harshness than was justifiable. Guardians had often refused relief to persons who had lived for a year or two in another parish, and much hardship and cruelty had been the consequence. He was glad, therefore, to understand, that the law of settlement was to undergo consideration. He thought that a union settlement and rating would be the most advantageous. He did not understand the reasoning of those persons who wished to abolish the law of settlement entirely, and to defray the expense of supporting the poor from the national resources; and who, nevertheless, in the next breath, opposed the appointment of any central authority. Why, these Gentlemen must have seen that the farmers, who exercised authority in townships, had exhibited a grasping and an illiberal disposition to the poor, in order to save their own pockets; and was it not to be supposed, that were the funds of the nation appropriated to the support of the poor, and these persons entrusted with the management, they might be induced to convert their powers into the means of eking out wages under the name of affording poor-law relief? In the township with which he himself was connected, the poor rates were exceedingly light, and there had lately been erected in it an establishment which gave employment to 1,000 persons. The assessment payable by that establishment might be nearly 1,000*l.*; but as all the hands resided in another township, the township in which he lived would have the advantage of the money, without being called upon to contribute to the relief of those workpeople. He deemed it exceedingly unjust to uphold a system which allowed the rich to escape, and compelled the poor to feed each other.

Captain HARRIS could not agree with those who altogether condemned the Act of last Session. In the union with which he was connected, they saw many evils in it certainly; but as it was the law of the land, they did the best they could to carry it out. On the other hand, the plan proposed by the noble Lord to-night seemed to him to be little else than the old law over again. He had understood that the Board of Commission was in the first instance intended to be temporary, for the purpose of carrying out the law, and that then it would be abolished. He could understand that there should be a clear law on the Statute-book, and a responsible officer in the House; but he objected to the existence of a district board making their own by-laws, from which there was no appeal.

Mr. ESCOTT considered the present proposal to be an utter failure, when regarded as the fulfilment of the promise of last Session, that there should be a total revision of the poor law of this country. It certainly would not answer public expectation. With regard to the appointment of a new Commission, with two of its members having seats in that House, he was not prepared to give a positive opinion; but at present he saw no advantage likely to be gained by the presence of those two gentlemen in Parliament, that would at all compensate for the infringement of a great public principle involved in such a provision. He would add, that he had long thought that all the complaints against the maladministration of the Poor Law Commissioners were in themselves futile, because the fault was in the original constitution of the board. It was a board which Parliament had no power to appoint; they had no power to appoint a board to make laws and regulations for the people of this country; it was a great error to appoint such a board, and it was no less an error to expect that a board so tyrannically appointed could act legally and satisfactorily. No body of men with such powers would ever act justly; the use of our laws and constitution was to prevent men having such powers; if they had them, they would of course abuse them; they would do so to the end of time, and they would do it no less when two of them had seats in that House.

Mr. VILLIERS believed, that if the question of the law of settlement could be disposed of, almost all questions of poor law would cease; there was hardly any complaint connected with the public system of relief of the poor, which did not spring out of that. A Committee, therefore, of more importance to the poor was never appointed. It would be only fair that the Government, in nominating it, should place upon it some one or two Gentlemen representing the opinion which the House had just heard stated—that settlement would be better done away altogether. That might be a notion impossible to be carried out; but it certainly prevailed very generally among intelligent and reflecting people, who saw the poor bandied about from one part of the country to another, and it ought to be represented in the Committee.

Mr. **BORTHWICK** agreed with the hon. Member for Winchester, that the original vice of the poor law, without getting rid of which there would never be a healthy system of poor relief, was, that it excluded from all the rights guaranteed to this nation by the constitution which we boasted, that class of people whom we called the poor. The noble Lord would now bring the parties concerned more into contact with public responsibility; but it was, at least, very doubtful whether that inherent vice of the law would be compensated. Without discussing the subject then, he would only ask whether the Government intended to follow precedent examples, and postpone the introduction of the Bill upon the main substance of the law until after the Committee had reported upon the law of settlement, or at what time the Bill would be introduced?

Sir G. **GREY** could not state at what precise period the Bill would be ready, but it had no connexion with the inquiry to be made by the Committee.

Motion agreed to.

On Motion of Sir G. Grey, an instruction to the Committee was agreed to, to inquire, in the first place, into the operation of the Poor Removal Act, and to report specially thereon to the House.

House adjourned at half-past Twelve o'clock.

HOUSE OF LORDS,

Saturday, January 23, 1846.

Minutes.] Public Bills.—1ª Corn Importation; Navigation.

CORN IMPORTATION BILL AND NAVIGATION BILL.

Brought from the Commons, and read 1ª.

The Marquess of **LANSDOWNE** gave notice that at the sitting of the House on Monday, he should propose the suspension of the Standing Orders of the House (Nos. 26 and 155), with the view of facilitating the progress of these two Bills through all their stages.

Lord **STANLEY** said, if he rightly understood the intentions of the noble Marquess, the course which he proposed to adopt had reference only to the two measures for suspending the Navigation Laws and the Laws relating to the Importation of Corn. He understood, also, that both measures were intended in their objects to be temporary, and were to be applied strictly to meet the present exigencies; and that it was not intended, therefore, to extend the operation of either of them beyond the first of September next. [The Marquess of Lansdowne: Hear, hear.] In that case, he thought he might say that there would be no opposition from any quarter—that no impediment would be offered to the noble Marquess to prevent him taking every step for facilitating the passing of those temporary measures. At the same time, he could not help availing himself of that opportunity to express his regret at the determination of Her Majesty's Government—if such really were their determination—upon the present occasion, and, simultaneously with those measures, to press as a permanent and not as a temporary measure the alteration of the duties affecting sugar, for the purpose of its introduction into breweries and distilleries. He confessed he should have been very glad if this measure had been introduced, as from the Queen's Speech he understood it would have been introduced, as a temporary measure; for it would then, he believed, have been passed with the entire unanimity of their Lordships, who could not have been unwilling to have adopted such a step to meet the exigencies of the present moment. To such a temporary measure there could have been little objection, at a period when there appeared to be a large stock of sugar on hand, whilst the price of barley was extraordinarily high. But when it was proposed to introduce this measure as a permanent and not as a temporary one, the Government could not expect that it would pass through the House with the same haste—with the same absence of discussion, or even with the same unanimity—as would mark those other two measures for the suspension of the corn and navigation laws; and he was sorry, as the three measures had been mentioned together in the Queen's Speech, that the same course had not been taken with all—and that all had not been temporary measures. He regretted this more particularly with regard to the alterations made last Session in the sugar duties—duties which would be in a constant state of diminution up to 1851, when they would be brought into perfect equality with home-grown sugars. They would have to look, therefore, in reference to the importation of sugar and the consumption of malt, to future prices, and those prices affected by the duties. There were several details connected with the Bill, which would require a good deal of consideration, and upon which it was necessary to have a good deal of information. He did not know what course the House of Commons intended to pursue; but he now threw it out for the consideration of the noble Marquess and the Government, in the event of their determining to adhere to the permanency of the measure, whether there would be any objection merely for the purpose of further inquiry, to refer the Bill to a Select Committee; not for the purpose of delay, which, at this period of the Session was manifestly out of the question, but for the purpose of examining and sifting by the examination of *vivâ voce* evidence the probable effect of the measure which was to be adopted. He hoped the noble Marquess would not think he was taking an improper opportunity of adverting to this subject. He thought it was of great importance that this measure should pass, not as a measure pressed forward by the Government, on the one hand, and opposed by the Members of that House on the other hand, as one calculated to alarm the parties interested, and seriously to affect the agricultural interests of the country, which he thought were fully entitled to some consideration. If it could be proved that the operation of the Bill was not injurious, let the case go before the public; and let the public, who had been much alarmed by the course of policy lately taken, have the opportunity of having the facts, the evidence, and the calculations in a more detailed form than they could possibly see them on a mere reference to casual debates in the House of Commons. He thought it most desirable such a course should be pursued; and he had taken the liberty of throwing out these suggestions to the noble Marquess and Her Majesty's Government, rather with a view of inducing them fully to consider the question, than from any desire of creating a vexatious opposition, or of throwing any impediment in the immediate passing of the measure. As he was on his legs, he might ask the noble Marquess what course he intended to pursue on Monday next, in reference to this measure, having no doubt a permanent and extensive operation. He understood the noble Marquess that he was to make a statement, and move for certain returns. If those papers were necessary for the understanding of the subject, there would be an obvious inconvenience in adjourning the debate, because they would adjourn the reception of papers which it was necessary to have in order to come to a fair conclusion, He had heard it rumoured—and it was in order to ascertain whether that rumour was correct—that he asked whether it was the noble Lord's intention, after making the statement, to postpone the further discussion on the Motion, and give an opportunity, at a later period, of resuming the discussion, before they were entitled to discuss it in a more formal manner on bringing up the Bills, because his noble Friend had admitted the other night that that would be a most inconvenient and inadequate opportunity for discussing points on which they might be able to throw out suggestions which Government might be desirous to adopt, but which could not be incorporated in the Bill after it came from the House of Commons? He, therefore, asked whether, after having made the statement on Monday next, the noble Lord proposed to give time to those who were deeply interested in this subject to express their opinion upon it?

The MARQUESS of LANSDOWNE said, he would answer the questions in the order in which the noble Lord had presented them.

LORD BROUGHAM observed, that the Motion that the Bills be read a first time had not been disposed of.

The MARQUESS of LANSDOWNE said, that it had, and the question now before the House was the notice of Motion which he had given for Monday next, that the Standing Orders be suspended. The noble Lord (Lord Stanley) had most correctly stated what was proposed with regard to the two Bills which were of a temporary nature which had been sent up from the other House. It was proposed, with respect to those Bills, to carry them through with all possible despatch, by suspending the Standing Orders, with a view to give them immediate operation. Certainly, no such course was intended with respect to the other Bill, that permitting the use of sugar in breweries and distilleries, which the noble Lord had truly stated was intended to be a permanent Bill. It had been matter of some doubt whether that should pass as a temporary Bill, to be adopted afterwards as a permanent Bill, and upon consideration it had been thought necessary rather at once to make it a permanent Bill, than ensure any reconsideration of the subject in the course of the present Session. There could be no doubt that this Bill was one of considerable detail, which could not be easily disposed of, and which no one could wish to propose to the House to pass through all its stages in the course of one night. Whenever that Bill did pass, it would be open to the House to give the fullest consideration to it. He was unwilling to pledge himself before the Bill came up as to the particular mode of dealing with it, whether to refer it to a Committee or not. Whether or no the details could be better considered in Committee, it would be for the House to determine.

Lord BROUGHAM: What course do you intend to take on Monday with regard to Ireland?

The Marquess of LANSDOWNE: I have stated on a former occasion that I should move for the production of certain papers with reference to the subject of Irish distress. Those papers will necessarily be of a very voluminous character, consisting, as they will, of the correspondence which has taken place between Her Majesty's Government and the various functionaries in Ireland relative to the proceedings adopted with regard to the public works and other matters. Those papers will put your Lordships in possession of every circumstance attending the alarming, numerous, and still increasing difficulties with which the Government has had to contend, in consequence of the unexampled scarcity of food in Ireland. I shall hope within a few days to be able to lay those papers upon the Table of the House; and I do not think it would be advisable to make any further statement as to the course which Her Majesty's Government intend to pursue, until some of the Bills which have been proposed by Her Majesty's Government shall be brought up from the other House. If noble Lords think it right to raise any discussion upon the subject before the introduction of those Bills, it will of course be competent for them to do so. I think it highly probable that in a very short time one or two of those Bills, to which it is not likely any opposition will be made, will come up to this House, with reference to the advance of considerable sums of public money towards the relief of the distress in Ireland; and an opportunity will then be afforded upon the first stage of any of those Bills of discussing fully any matters connected with the state of that unhappy country.

Lord BROUGHAM said, a measure involving a permanent alteration in the whole colonial and agricultural policy of the country, was as serious a matter as suspending the Habeas Corpus Act. More so indeed; and they might just as well talk of suspending that Act in one day, as of passing this other Bill in the same period. The idea was perfectly preposterous, and they therefore wanted no information on that matter. He very much doubted, indeed, whether they should agree so speedily to the Bills which had been sent up from the House of Commons for the suspension of the corn and navigation laws. He could not, until he saw in what state the Bill appeared, say what should be done with the Bill for the admission of sugar into distilleries. Of course that Bill would require much consideration, and his present impression was strongly in favour of a temporary as compared with a permanent measure. If it were a temporary measure, there would then be no necessity for a Committee; but if a permanent one, there certainly should be a Committee of Inquiry. There was another question which he wished to put relative to another Bill which was shortly to be brought up from the House of Commons. There could be no doubt the poor law was shaken to its foundation—that was quite clear. Clamour, violence, and unscrupulous agitation, had had its effect. Pressure from without had operated to the great joy of those who had been the authors of the clamour, partly for the gratification of personal spleen, and partly for the gratification of the most senseless theories, which clothed themselves in the name and garb of humanity, but which were the most injurious to the people of this country that could be entertained; for the poor law had always been intended for the benefit of the poor, and not of the proprietors: that he should ever maintain. Their Lordships, also, though at a time of great party violence, had been almost unanimous on that point — [The Duke of Wellington: Hear, hear!]—and it had obtained no more strenuous supporter than the noble Duke at the Table (the Duke of Wellington). And in the House of Commons, after all the violence that had been exerted, and the threats, amounting to threats of personal violence even, had been used, there were only eighteen found to back the out-door opponents of that Bill. He should hope that the Bill would be introduced in a manner to insure for it the most calm and mature deliberation, and that no one part—not an inch—of that corner-stone of the important fabric, viz., the central superintendence, should be interfered with without the greatest circumspection and the most mature deliberation. For this reason, he should have preferred that the Bill had been introduced in that House in preference to the other House of Parliament.

The MARQUESS of LANSDOWNE said, it was not at all inconsistent with the introduction of the Bill into the other House first, that it should still receive at the hands of their Lordships the fullest and most ample consideration; and he quite agreed with the noble and learned Lord that no subject of more importance existed, and none which more required their Lordships' attention. He should be sorry, therefore, that it should be introduced in any form which would prevent their Lordships giving to it the fullest consideration, or which would preclude the possibility of admitting any suggestions for its improvement. He could not, however, allow the statement of the noble and learned Lord to pass unnoticed. So far from the proposed Bill being intended in any degree to impair the efficacy of the poor law, it was only designed to give additional efficacy to its working. The idea of impairing or withdrawing the foundation on which that Bill had been formed, was far from being the intention of the Government. The Bill for the admission of sugar into distilleries would come up in such a state as would give their Lordships ample time to consider it. The Government had made a great distinction between that Bill and the other Bills for the suspension of the corn and navigation laws.

LORD BROUGHAM saw no reason whatever why the Poor Law Bill, when ready, should not be at first introduced to that House. It would be far more dispassionately considered in that House, in the first instance, than in the other House; and he hoped the Government would adopt a course so likely to prevent clamour and opposition.

EARL FITZWILLIAM did not know in what form the Poor Law Bill might be brought in; but he agreed with his noble and learned Friend (Lord Brougham), that it would be better to introduce it first in that House. He had heard with great satisfaction from his noble Friend (the Marquess of Lansdowne) that it was not intended to interfere materially with the mode in which the poor law was administered. It was absolutely necessary that there should be central superintendence; but, at the same time, he did not think there should be constant central interference. He quite agreed with his noble and learned Friend, it was most desirable that that superintendence should be exercised in a quarter entirely free from the political changes of the day. A Minister of this kind ought ought to be in Parliament for the purpose of being questioned, and to give information; and not merely a constant superintendent over the management and administration of the law. He trusted, therefore, that no threats of pressure out of doors, no desire to conciliate support in the other House, would induce Her Majesty's Government to flinch from their determination that a real and practical superintendence of this law should be in the hands of persons not liable to the political changes of the day.

House adjourned.

HOUSE OF LORDS,

Monday, January 25, 1847.

MINUTES.] PUBLIC BILLS.—2ª Corn Importation; Navigation.

3ª and passed:—Corn Importation; Navigation.

PETITIONS PRESENTED. From Guardians of the Woodbridge Union, for Alteration of the Law of Settlement.—From Poor Law Guardians of Leeds, for Amendment of the Poor Removal Act.—From Brewers of Bury St. Edmunds, for the Repeal of the Act prohibiting the Use of Sugar and Molasses in Breweries.—From Ireland, for the Adoption of such Measures as will ensure the People of Ireland such a Supply of Food as will save them from Starvation.

CORN IMPORTATION BILL—NAVIGATION BILL.

The MARQUESS of LANSDOWNE moved, that the Standing Orders, Nos. 26, and 155, be suspended, in order to allow these Bills to be carried through as quickly as possible.

The EARL of CLARENDON said, it was his duty to ask their Lordships to assent to the Bills, which were read a first time on Saturday, for admitting corn free of duty into this country, and for the suspension of the navigation laws, until the 1st of September next. Although he anticipated no opposition upon the part of their

Lordships to the second reading and further progress of the Bills which he intended to move, yet he was desirous to state the reasons which made the Government wish that the Bills should be carried in the shortest possible time, in order to afford every facility within their power to the importation of corn to this country. Inasmuch, however, as their Lordships were, no doubt, desirous of proceeding to the business for which they were especially summoned, he would not detain them at any length. The necessity of affording facilities for the introduction of foreign corn, was now more evident and more urgent than it appeared some weeks ago. The quality of the last wheat crop was good, and the quantity nearly an average, and an unprecedented quantity of foreign corn, amounting to from 4,000,000 to 5,000,000 quarters, had been introduced into this country. The price of wheat in the first week in October was 54*s.* per quarter; and, although it rose to 62*s.* in the first week of November, yet it fell to 59*s.* in the third week of the latter month, with a downward tendency. The Government received satisfactory assurances that the large importation of foreign corn would go far to remedy the failure in the potato crop; and they had also reason to believe that the failure of that crop had been greatly exaggerated, as well in France and Belgium as in this country. The case, however, was different now. The apprehended demand for an unusual supply was not confined to this country; but on the 16th of November the French Minister of Agriculture and Commerce published an official statement, to the effect that the failure in the potato crop was one-third or one-fourth of the whole. Great and general distress prevailed in France, Holland, Belgium, and the whole of Germany; and prices at Antwerp, Havre, and London were so nearly on an equality that the duty of 4*s.* a quarter, which the Government proposed to suspend, had become an important consideration. In France the navigation laws had been suspended, and a nominal duty of 6*d.* per quarter was imposed upon wheat. We ought, therefore, not to allow ourselves to be deprived of any advantages in the way of the importation of corn, either by the operation of our corn or our navigation laws. It was stated that the effect of repealing the duty of 4*s.* would be, that the present holders of corn in bond would pocket the whole of the duty remitted. But, for himself, he confessed that he regarded that much-abused class of persons, the dealers in corn, as great public benefactors, to whom they were all indebted, and he would rather they should put 50,000*l.* into their pockets, which it was said they would do if Government remitted the duty on 260,000 quarters of wheat, than that the sufferings of the poor of this country should be aggravated by the corn being taken away and distributed in other parts of the world. The navigation laws were now found to be operating very injuriously against the means of procuring supplies of food. At present we could only get corn in British vessels, or the vessels of the country exporting the corn, and the consequence was, that a difficulty was thereby created in bringing corn from Odessa and ports in the United States, inasmuch as corn from Odessa or the United States could not, unless carried in British, be carried in any other than in Russian or American vessels, while it appeared that of 520 vessels laden with corn at Odessa, only 49 ships were English. The navigation laws had been suspended in France, and the result of that was that 37,000 tons of grain had arrived at Marseilles, which could not, under our navigation laws, come to this country; but supposing that we allowed Dutch or American vessels to bring corn to this country from other countries, we would thereby facilitate the importation of corn. Such a measure was rendered the more necessary from the present high rate of freights everywhere. At Odessa, where the rate of freight for corn was usually 8*s.* per quarter, it was now 14*s.*; at Trieste, where it was usually 7*s.*, it was now 15*s.*; in the United States, where the prices were commonly 8*s.* per quarter for wheat, and for flour 3*s.* 6*d.* a barrel, freights were now 15*s.* and 5*s.* 6*d.* respectively. There was, indeed, great difficulty in procuring ships at all in the United States, in consequence of the Government of that country taking up all the vessels they could procure to convey stores and provisions to their army in Mexico. The result of the present high rate of freights was, that ships were tempted to make long voyages, and that vessels were withdrawn from the coasting trade. The freight of a quarter of corn from London to Cork, which was usually from 1*s.* to 1*s.* 6*d.*, was now 3*s.* 6*d.*, being about treble the ordinary amount. It was hoped that the effect of repealing the navigation laws would be, that some British vessels might be disengaged and employed in the coasting trade. He confessed that he did not expect any very great benefit from the removal of these restrictions; but if their suspension caused any larger importation, he would say even the importation of a single additional cargo —or if they thereby prevented prices from rising any higher (which was the more likely to happen), the people of this country would feel that they were to some extent in a better condition, and their Lordships would have the consciousness that they had done what they could to mitigate the evils of the present scarcity.

Lord BROUGHAM said, he should offer no opposition to the two measures proposed by the Government.

The Marquess of SALISBURY said, he would not offer any opposition to the suspension of the corn and navigation laws, although he did not expect that corn would be much lower in price if they were passed.

The Earl of MOUNTCASHELL said, that every noble Lord of proper feelings, who knew the actual state of Ireland, must support the Government in their present measures. If they had been permanent, he should have opposed them; but, as their operation would only be temporary, he should offer no objection to them.

Bills read 2^a (according to Order), and Standing Orders Nos. 26 and 155 *considered* (according to Order) and *dispensed with:* Committee *negatived;* and Bills read 3^a, and *passed.*

STATE OF IRELAND.

The Marquess of LANSDOWNE then rose and said: I rise in pursuance of a Notice which I gave to move for the production of certain Papers relating to the Distress which at present prevails in Ireland, including the Correspondence which has taken place between the Board of Works and the Commissariat Department, and certain Officers engaged in the conduct of the arrangements which have been made with a view to the alleviation of that distress. My Lords, the Motion which I have now to make is one with respect to which I anticipate no opposition; but nevertheless I should not think it respectful to your Lordships, or suitable to the importance of the subject, if I did not avail myself of the earliest opportunity of laying before this House the actual state of things with relation to which I am about to make this Motion—to the measures to which the Government have had recourse for the purpose of mitigating the distress in Ireland, and the measures which, instructed by the experience of the past, and made more and more aware as the season advanced of the magnitude of the calamity, Her Majesty's Government propose to submit to your Lordships, in the hope that there will be only one feeling of anxiety to administer, to the utmost extent that shall be safe and practicable, every remedy that can be presented for that unfortunate part of the kingdom. I am fully aware, that in the statement which I have to make, I cannot fail to weary your Lordships; or if I should not be wearisome, it can only be caused by the deep and melancholy interest which every one of your Lordships must take in the subject of this Motion. It is useless, my Lords, for us to deceive ourselves with regard to the magnitude of the evil which we are now called upon to meet: that evil has been, unhappily, placed before us in colours too clear and distinct to leave room for doubt; and whatever flattering hopes your Lordships may have indulged in at an earlier period of the season, I have no doubt that when this calamity and its extent have been thoroughly sifted and examined, it will be found by your Lordships to be the greatest calamity with respect to that part of the United Kingdom which has ever fallen upon any country described in the history of civilized Europe. We have read of such calamities in oriental countries, the descriptions of which are almost poetical; but within that period of history with the facts of which we are accurately acquainted, there is no account of the means of sustenance of a people having been so generally destroyed, so entirely withdrawn from them, as that which we have witnessed in Ireland. It is as useless and as unwise for us to attempt to deceive ourselves with respect to the magnitude of the calamity with which we have to contend, as it would be in case of a war to underrate the force, the numbers, and the power of the enemy by whom we might be threatened; and I will therefore state to your Lordships what, according to the best calculations, is the amount of loss in money value which the country has sustained from the recent failure in the crops in Ireland. Taking the rent of the land in Ireland for potatoes at 10*l.* an acre, and for oats at 3*l.* 10*s.*, the deficit in money from the failure of the crop would be 11,350,000*l.* in potatoes, and 4,660,000*l.* in oats, or about a total value of 16,000,000*l.*, which has fallen on a country, which, if it cannot be said to be the poorest, is certainly not one of the richest in the world; and in weight between 8,000,000 and

9,000,000 of tons—a loss equivalent to 1,500,000 acres of arable land. Two considerations must arise in your Lordships' minds on the bare simple statement of these facts—that this is a calamity which is a dispensation of Providence to which we must submit, and that it is one which we are bound to endeavour as far as it is practicable to alleviate; but that it is, at the same time, one to which it is impossible to apply a complete and adequate remedy. There is another consideration which cannot fail to impress itself on your Lordships, so many of whom are acquainted with the history and state of society in Ireland—and it is this, that great as such a calamity as this would be in any country in the world, there are circumstances in the habits and situation of the people of Ireland which aggravate its weight and pressure on them, and deprive them, in a greater degree than would be the case with any other people, of other means of relief, by taking refuge in different means of subsistence or different habits from those to which they are accustomed. One conviction, then, will arise in your minds, and I hope also in the minds of all persons in this country as well as in Ireland, viz., that whatever disposition there may be to affix blame in particular quarters, there is no person or body of persons who can with any degree of justice be charged with having produced the weight of this calamity. I state this because I know that many persons say that they think there has been that in the conduct of the landlords of Ireland which has contributed to produce the calamity with which that country is afflicted. I have already stated this belief, that whatever blame may attach (as must be the case in all societies) to particular individuals or classes, or whether or not more blame may attach to the landlords of Ireland than to the same class in any other country, for a greater degree of negligence or remissness, yet I venture to say that there is nothing that is within their reach to perform, that there is no effort they could have made within the past ten years, that could in any degree have averted that great calamity from Ireland. I have heard it said in some societies, why did the landlords of Ireland allow this population to depend for their subsistence on so wretched, uncertain, and perilous a produce as the potato? Why, it would be quite as reasonable and just, if three-fourths of this great city of London were to be destroyed by fire, to ask those by whom the houses were built, why they did not build them of marble or Portland stone? The answer would have been, London would not have been London if that condition had been applied to its building. And so, in like manner, the answer would be, that Ireland would not have been Ireland, or its population what it is. It may be much to be lamented that the production of the potato should have increased to the extent it has; but there have been no means in the power of those who possess the land of that country, or in the power of the Government, but means of the most gradual description. Those means have, I believe, been applied to a certain extent to industry and agriculture in Ireland, and the cultivation of that country has been of late years assuming a character of greater utility to the people than before. This has been effected by the introduction of science and capital. But those means are in their nature slow; and if the proprietors of land in Ireland are charged with not effecting a great alteration suddenly in the social economy of the country, let it be remembered that if they had endeavoured to do so, they could only do it by means of exercising the powers which belong to the rights and privileges of property—powers which in full no man would wish to exercise under the present circumstances of Ireland, and which, if they had been exercised, would subject them to reprobation and blame—by doing that which would have been undoubtedly most effectual in an economical point of view, but which, by the general clearing of estates, would have been attended with an amount of misery, crime, and unhappiness, which I do not believe those persons who suggest that mode of proceeding, because they believe that in its ultimate results it would be beneficial to the whole country, would have themselves countenanced; while they would not have abstained from condemning every person who might take on himself to pursue it, and by so doing sport with the lives and the happiness of persons who were living on his land, for the sake of obtaining an ultimate economical benefit. Such economical advantages can only be arrived at by slow degrees; and it is while a better system has been going on in many parts of the country, that Ireland has been subjected to that overwhelming affliction to which your Lordships' attention is now called. My Lords, if this has been the case with regard to the proprietors of the soil—if they have not been enabled by any efforts of theirs to ward off so sudden and heavy a blow—equally is it true that it was impossible for any Government to prevent the calamity which has fallen with such weight on the unhappy population of that country. My Lords, we must recollect what is the nature of the evil with which the Government and society have had to deal; that it has been a question not of money, as many have supposed it, but a question of food; and that whatever efforts the Government might have made—whatever sums it might devote to the object of guarding against a calamity of this description—whatever might be effected by any poor law that exists, or any poor law that might exist in that country for providing against destitution, neither of these systems of relief, whether administered centrally by the Government, or locally by boards of guardians, would be able to do what was necessary to avert such a calamity, namely, to create food. It is in the power of Governments to abstract food from one part of the country or of the world, and to convey it to another—it is in the power of the poor law to take money out of one man's pocket and put it into another man's; but neither can produce that which is wanted in the present instance—a supply of food adequate to the wants of millions of persons who have been deprived of the lowest description of food, which is that to which they have hitherto been accustomed. My Lords, supposing it had been a question of money, I am quite prepared to say that there is no sum which it would not have been the duty of Government to have proposed to Parliament, for the extinction, if by such means it could be extinguished, of so great an evil. But if Government had applied ten millions to that purpose, would that have been adequate? Do those persons who state this as their opinion of what the conduct of the Government should have been, recollect that the very act of the Government in this direction, the instant it became known, added inconceivably to the difficulty, and that even where the result of such extraordinary interference was the production of an artificial plenty for the moment, it led, in the very next week or month, to increased scarcity? If ten millions had been applied to that object, before those ten millions could have been taken into the market to have purchased food, whatever the price of corn might have been at the time, prices would have risen, and you would have been told that twenty millions were wanted. Before the twenty millions could have been applied, forty millions would have been wanted, because at every moment the action of the Government would be felt in the markets of England and of Europe; they came into the markets known to be the most powerful purchasers, and the effect would be the invariable rise of price, and that no other purchasers would be able to contend against them. By coming into the markets and making biddings higher than the biddings of other countries, undoubtedly they might have obtained corn for the moment; but the effect would be that prices in those markets would be raised, until the scarcity would become infinitely greater than before. It is universally admitted that Governments are the worst of cultivators, the worst of manufacturers, and the worst of traders. But does the fact of a thing being much wanted at the moment convert Government into the best of traders? On the contrary, their action is then more felt than ever; and the consequence of their interference is more injurious. And I must say with respect to the late and to the present Governments, that nothing could have justified their going into any market at all, but the extreme reserve and prudence with which they have conducted their operations—a reserve and prudence which have enabled them to go into the different markets of the world without exciting, by their caution and the limited extent to which their operations have been confined, any particular degree of attention and alarm which would be likely to divert the natural current of trade; on which alone you can depend, either in times of prosperity or of adversity, for the supply of any country. I have now, my Lords, to state what has been the course taken by the Government, with the view of mitigating the distress when it arose, and for the purpose of still further mitigating it, when, towards the close of the year, the extent and nature of the distress became still more apparent. I shall then state what are the immediate measures which it is the intention of the Government now to propose, with a view to the utmost practical amelioration of the condition of the people of Ireland. Your Lordships will recollect that at the close of last Session, and at the commencement of the alarm respecting the distress which prevailed in Ireland, Her Majesty's Government did not think fit to allow Parliament to separate, without providing what they thought might prove a considerable mitigation of the distress which it was apparent was approaching. The measure then passed has proved, I believe, to the extent of which it was capable, an alleviation of the distress, though I am ready to admit at the same time, from the very magnitude of the evil—from the growth of the machinery necessary to meet that evil—from the very extended operation of that Act in many parts of Ireland, that it has been attended with many evil consequences; and consequences which your Lordships will do well to weigh, in determining on those measures to which you shall now have recourse. But at the time your Lordships adopted that measure, you adopted it with the view of making what was then only thought necessary—a bridge to pass over to another year—until the harvest time, and certainly without any expectation—an expectation which no man could then entertain—that the harvest would have proved a failure to the extent of three times the failure of the preceding year. In such circumstances you adopted that measure, in order to ensure a certain amount of labour and relief during that period, in which it was presumed there would be a great deficiency of food in Ireland. It was intended only to meet the urgency of the moment, and was founded on principles which no man could have defended as a permanent measure. I, myself, when it was introduced, stated I conceived it to be unjustifiable in principle. I stated it was subject to the evils of a labour rate, though in my opinion it was not so bad, not so vicious in principle, as a labour rate; but I did not disguise from myself or from the House, that though Her Majesty's Government, and though the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, who sat by my side at that moment, and whom your Lordships knew to be so intimately acquainted with the state of that country and of society in it, were persuaded that it would afford a temporary mitigation of the evil to be apprehended; yet, I say, I could not disguise from myself, nor did I state the contrary to the House, that it was not calculated for anything like a permanent remedy. That measure was immediately acted upon in Ireland; it was founded on an attempt to unite relief and employment. I believe it has always been found, that wherever that attempt has been made under any system in any country, the effect has been injurious either to labour or to relief; the relief is impaired by the work, and the work is impaired in its efficacy by the consideration of the relief. Nevertheless, that was the object of that measure, as it has been the object of many other measures which have been at different times and in different countries attempted to be applied to the social system in periods of scarcity and want; and, my Lords, I now believe, if the extent of the calamity had not proved to be so great—if the consequent alarm had not been of such a magnitude in Ireland when that scarcity came to be felt, that a very great number of people might have been relieved, and a very great amount of good might have been effected by that measure. I stated at that time that I did not at all look to the application of that relief to what were called "useless works." I apprehended at the time that there would have been a field of labour opened up in Ireland for making public works, such as might have afforded very great relief; and yet that none should have been entered on which were not of a permanent useful character. Had it been possible to have confined the operation of that measure to such works, I believe its operation would have been eminently beneficial; but, my Lords, from the moment that, owing to the state of alarm that prevailed in that country—from the moment that, owing to the disposition to call for assistance and advance of public money, that public money was applied to other than permanently useful works—from that moment the operation of that measure ceased to be of a useful character. Your Lordships have probably not forgotten, that in the month of September the alarm respecting the impending scarcity of food in Ireland greatly increased: in October it increased again: and the consequence of that alarm was, that presentments were made for public works, in, I must say, a most unparalleled manner, and betraying a spirit of recklessness likely to be productive of the very worst results. It required positively an army of persons to superintend the operations. I will just state to your Lordships the number of persons employed by the Board of Works, not only to give your Lordships an idea of the efforts that were made to meet the evil, but also of the difficulties of carrying that measure into effect, and of the impossibility of continuing to persist in such a system. I find that there were employed by the board down to last year 385 surveyors and engineers, 2,832 check clerks, 6,894 overseers, 132 general clerks, and 491 pay clerks, making in all 8,000 or 9,000 persons employed by the Commissioners of

Public Works, and employed too, all of them, in offices of trust. Now, I would ask your Lordships whether it is possible, with such a system, to exclude the occurrence of a great amount of abuse? I say it was altogether unavoidable, owing to the extent to which that system was carried. Of the Board of Works itself it is impossible to speak without the utmost respect—not with respect merely, but with gratitude. They were men who, with universal approbation, were selected at the time for their experience, their knowledge, their integrity and impartiality; and I am bound to say, that of the possession of all those qualities those gentlemen have given the most undoubted proofs throughout the whole course of those works. But it must be remembered that the Board of Works were obliged to operate upon the mass of the population through the instrumentality of others; that they were not always able to select the instruments whom they would prefer; that they were compelled to act under the pressure of circumstances, to confide in parties not always worthy of their confidence, and to place constant reliance upon local assistance; which local assistance, I am sorry to say, was not always forthcoming to the requisite extent, though in many cases it was readily conceded. However, the inevitable consequence of the measure has been, that, from the increased demand for labour for objects of a nature which could not be effectually controlled, a bounty was created for the indolent, the idle, and the profligate, to take advantage of that relief which was intended for the needy and the poor. Such a system, my Lords, when it came to exhibit itself as offering something like a premium on idleness, and consequently began to withdraw persons from useful occupations, and their habitual pursuits, called forth all that was bad, and all that was vicious, and all that was false, such as is to be found lurking in the bosom of all societies:—

> "Et dolus, insidiæque, et amor sceleratus habendi."

All those passions which are found existing in all societies, and of course existing in this, are brought into vitality and life by the immense extension of these establishments. To a fearful extent were those sources of evil augmented. Many were there amongst the people of Ireland who were not exposed to the degree of want which has been somewhat inconsiderately predicated of the whole population; those men quitted their own possessions for the purpose and with the intention of getting employment from the State, in a manner neither advantageous to themselves nor the country. My Lords, I have fairly stated what I think were the vices of, and at the same time the reasons for establishing that system, and for maintaining it up to a certain extent. Beyond that extent, however, in autumn last, it undoubtedly went; and I, for one, felt no surprise, and feel none now, at the general sentiment which in autumn last was expressed in Ireland, that the money which was being advanced for the purpose of relief should be extended to advances for the purpose of effecting useful private works when there were no useful public works on which the people could be employed. Incessant applications were made to Government to that effect; and the Government of Ireland, with the sanction of the English Government, did, under the authority of Mr. Labouchere's letter, authorize advances for that purpose. That extension was sanctioned by Her Majesty's Government, for they had very little difficulty in coming to the conclusion, that where proper security for repayment was given, money might be advanced to the electoral districts at the instance of the parties principally interested. The Government judged that that mode of relieving distress would be amongst the most effectual, and they acceded to applications made under Mr. Labouchere's letter. It was opened to the parties concerned to make those applications; they did make them to a considerable extent; and under the operation of both systems a great amount of relief was given to the people of Ireland. Under the operations of these two systems—I mean that constituted first by the Act of last Session, and by the extension afforded by Mr. Labouchere's letter—a great amount of relief has been afforded in Ireland, though undoubtedly such relief has not been attended with such beneficial consequences as to leave the country in a greatly improved state. But, my Lords, the attention of Her Majesty's Government was not confined to those measures only, and to their endeavours for carrying them out. Relief committees were also, with the concurrence of Her Majesty's Government, established in every part of the country; 950 of those relief committees have been put into operation, and every one of them has in a greater or less degree received not only countenance but pecuniary assistance from Her Majesty's Government. Although at the same time it would have been, for the reasons I have stated, most impolitic and unwise of Her Majesty's Government to have become traders in human food, or to have interfered with the steady current of private supply and of private enterprise; yet, whilst they have fulfilled the engagements made last summer with the city of London, and with the mercantile interests of the country, not to interfere with the foreign trade, they have still been active in purchasing, where it could be done quietly and safely, and without breach of faith or other injustice, such an amount of provisions as might enable them to establish depôts in particular places; and they have accordingly provided such an amount as I cannot exactly state, but an amount which has been sufficient to produce an effect in particular quarters, more particularly in very remote places, difficult of access, where the ordinary means of relief could scarcely have been brought into operation. My Lords, they have also furnished all the assistance that could be furnished by means of public mills, which have been incessantly employed in grinding the corn which had been brought to Ireland for the relief of the suffering poor; and, though the Government have not interfered to regulate the supply of food, yet the efforts that they have made were necessary, and have been attended with success. Her Majesty's Government have also employed—anve I am glad to state this, because a question was asked in this House, whether the means which the Admiralty had at its disposal, had been properly employed—why, my Lords, the Admiralty could not interfere with the regular course of foreign relations; but as far as related to the distribution of food, the efforts of the Admiralty have been incessant, effectual, and successful—and I trust they will continue to be so employed. I hold in my hand, my Lords, an account of Her Majesty's shipping which have been so employed in the service of provisioning the people. I will not fatigue your Lordships by following the example of a noble Earl the other night, who enumerated all the ships that might be employed in such a service; but I may state, that I hold in my hand a list of those vessels, which I could, if I pleased, enumerate. I find that forty vessels have been actually incessantly employed in that service, and that five more are on the point of being engaged, and probably will be so next week.

The EARL of MOUNTCASHELL: Will the noble Marquess state how much has already been distributed for the relief of the poor?

The MARQUESS of LANSDOWNE continued: Upon reflection, I am sure that the noble Earl will see that is a question I should not answer. Instead of reading over a whole list of those vessels, I think it will be most satisfactory to your Lordships that I should inform you of their number, as I have already done—that their tonnage amounts to 28,232 tons—and that the power of the steamers is equivalent to that of 8,373 horses. By these means a certain amount of good has been effected in those parts that have been the most distressed by the pressure of the calamity. These details may appear insignificant and trifling; but it must be satisfactory to your Lordships to know that nothing has been omitted by the Government to make up the deficiency which would be created by the increasing price and demand for grain. But even beyond the statements which I have thus thought it my duty to lay before the House, further and other efforts have been made—soup-kitchens have been established in every part of Ireland. Not only has that been done by a system of donations to a large amount; but everything that could be found in the shape of boilers, iron pots, and vessels of that sort, has been made available; and any stores of that description that could be found in the military departments of the country have been placed at the disposal of the Government of Ireland, and are already beginning to produce a beneficial effect. Many grinding mills also have been prepared, and have been sent over to facilitate the grinding of corn. I think, my Lords, I have now stated what has been done up to the present moment with the view of meeting this deplorable calamity. And now I have to state what Her Majesty's Government are convinced must be the true principles on which all future remedies can be advantageously applied. My Lords, to continue upon its present extensive scale the whole of those works which have been commenced in Ireland, and which have been projected, and to add still further to their number, as it would undoubtedly be necessary to do if no other source of employment could be supplied, will, I am sure, upon reflection appear to your Lordships, if not absolutely impracticable, at least unwise, and likely to be attended with the most mischievous and unfortunate consequence of permanently diverting the people of that country from engaging and persevering in their usual pursuits, by accustoming them to look to employment from the Government as that from which more is to be obtained than from the cultivation of the soil, or from their customary occupations. I believe in many cases the consequence of those works has been, that the most fertile soils have not been cultivated; that the greatest encouragements to cultivate them which have been held out by the proprietors have been found to be useless, on account of the extraordinary preference given by the labourers to the employment of the Government. The ill-working of the system at first led to the adoption of task-work; but even the adoption of that mode of work, though it had for a great time the advantage of causing a greater amount of work to be done, was yet not without its attendant evil. Its evil was this—the best workmen were those who naturally got the best pay, because they could perform the most work; and its consequence was, that the best workmen became quite inaccessible to the proprietors of the land, who were obliged to put up with the refuse workmen, whilst the Government works were monopolising the best workmen. The result was, that the cultivation of the land was neglected, though the cultivation of the land was the real remedy for the evils under which Ireland now labours. My Lords, all these reasons will, I am convinced, weigh with your Lordships, as they have with the Government, in coming to the determination that those presentment works shall cease —not suddenly, on the instant — but as speedily as possible on the completion of such useful works as may be at present engaged in: that the works shall be useful must necessarily be the foundation of any good measure to be proposed. Then, my Lords, as soon as it was foreseen that it would be necessary speedily to escape from a system which was never intended to be a permanent one, there arose the necessity for securing a large demand for labour in Ireland. And, my Lords, I confess I have throughout felt, as I believe every one must feel upon consideration of the papers which will be laid upon the Table of your Lordships' House, that that demand for labour in Ireland is to be found through the medium of individual proprietors, assisted for that purpose by the Government. My Lords, there is every advantage to the country as well as to individuals in works being so carried on and so directed. The individual proprietor is the best judge of what works ought to be done — the individual proprietor is the best judge of the means by which they should be carried on — the individual proprietor is the best able to select the labourer, and the tools, and the machinery, with which they should be carried on—the individual proprietor is the one that has the deepest interest in their ultimate success. In proportion, therefore, as you can, through the medium of the individual proprietor, call a great amount of activity, exertion, and labour, into existence, to that amount do you really benefit and increase the prosperity of the whole country. And if, as I am sanguine enough to hope, by the measures about to be proposed, every individual proprietor in Ireland will be placed in a situation—as he will be placed, if he choose —to give a very great amount of employment in the mode most beneficial to himself and to the country at large; then I trust your Lordships will see, not only a temporary amelioration—not only an occasional remedy—but something like a permanent, lasting remedy to the evils of that country; for it will secure, not only for this year, but for years to come, a steady, regular, constant, and well-understood application of large sums of money for the purpose of promoting the industry of the country. With this view a Treasury Minute was made on the 1st of December, and subsequently extended by another statute, which, though in part it carried out a previous existing statute, another Act of Parliament would be required for giving effect to the intention of the Government. Her Majesty's Government now propose that every landed proprietor in Ireland who thinks proper to carry on any system of improvement — be that improvement what it may, so that it is a substantial improvement — shall receive a loan, for which he shall pay no other interest than 3½ per cent, for the next twenty-two years. Upon entailed estates the life proprietor will be enabled to obtain that loan upon the same terms as the proprietor in fee-simple. They will not only have the opportunily of obtaining the loan for 3½ per cent for twenty-two years, but they may return the principal by instalments, and during any period of that time, choosing their own times; or they may pay 6½ per cent, and so return no principal. Further, if they prefer relieving themselves of a charge so incurred for enabling them to improve parts of an estate, the life proprietor may, in the case of entailed estates, be permitted to sell portions of them in order to relieve the remainder. This is a measure which, I think, will have a most certain, and, I venture to anticipate, a most rapid effect in ameliorating the condition of the people of Ireland. But Her Majesty's Government do not confine themselves to that alone. I should have said, having adverted in the earlier part of my speech to the works undertaken under Mr. Labouchere's letter, it will be deemed but an act of fairness, that many who have undertaken works, from a desire for the public welfare, shall have the facility afforded them of accepting the more advantageous terms which this Act will give them; and they will thus place themselves in the same position as those who apply for, and receive, loans under this measure. There is another description of works which will remain very much upon their present footing, except that greater facilities will be afforded for their execution than under the Acts of the late Session of Parliament; I mean drainage works, to be undertaken for the proprietors, but by the Board of Works; all individual works—I mean all works of a minor character—for the improvement of estates had better be left in the hands of individuals. But on private estates, or on combinations of private estates or of proprietors, there are many instances in which the operations for the benefit of those estates, particularly when connected with such works as drainages, embankments, water-courses, and outfalls, might be much more effectually carried on under the superintendence of the Board of Works, than of the individual proprietors. It is proposed for all these things, independently of the loan to individuals at $3\frac{1}{2}$ per cent to carry on such works as they shall specify, that, by giving 4 per cent, any proprietor, or knot of proprietors combining, may obtain assistance, and thus be enabled to co-operate in the carrying forward of reproductive works; the Board of Works superintending such works, for the purpose of compelling those proprietors whose assistance should not be obtained, from their being out of the country, or otherwise, to co-operate in and bear jointly the charges of those works. The general result, then, of these two measures, taken together, would be, that there was not one proprietor in Ireland, from one end of the country to the other, be his circumstances what they might—be he in the situation of what was called rich, or being comparatively poor—who would not be enabled, if he thought proper, to set in active operation an amount of labour, profitable to himself and advantageous to the country. And, my Lords, I do not think so ill of the proprietors of Ireland as to believe that with all these facilities made accessible to them in every shape, and made attainable in every mode, and with every incitement to adopt them, derived from the events which the last six months have produced, and which, I am sorry to say, are in prospect for years yet to come, they will not universally, or with very few exceptions, avail themselves almost immediately of them, and that at no distant period the country will exhibit a scene of active labour and employment from one end to the other, the effect of which will be to supply a demand for labour which it is evident there is not at present the means of providing by the ordinary modes, or by perseverance in what have hitherto been the ordinary habits of the island. I must freely state to your Lordships, that, in my own opinion, this is the most important measure that Her Majesty's Government could propose. It is one in which, individually, I have long felt the greatest personal interest. There are undoubtedly other measures which it is hoped may also contribute to ensure the great object of effecting an alteration in the habits of the people, by creating a demand for labour. Before I enter upon those measures, I should state that it is conceived, that in the changes which will be operated through the country, a change will also take place between the employment of labourers under the Relief Act, and that of labourers upon works conducted under the Board of Works; that in passing from one state to the other, under the present unfortunate circumstances of a scarcity of food, and the difficulty of procuring it, there will naturally be a state of considerable difficulty, in which some public relief must be afforded—relief which can only be afforded upon temporary principles, without making the measure a permanent law. It is supposed that, as these public works drop, and before the others are, to the fullest extent, pursued, there must be a considerable number of persons dependent upon public charity for support—upon charity which it is impossible, in the present condition of Ireland, to expect individuals to give. A Bill, therefore, will be introduced to effect a distribution of food to persons only who are indigent, destitute, and evidently unable to procure sustenance. This measure is to be accompanied with what has been justly and appropriately called the workhouse test. No person is to be admitted to have this food that can be admitted into the workhouse and receive sustenance and support there; but in cases where the workhouse test cannot be applied, where persons are absolutely destitute, and are proved to have no means of employment, it is proposed, for a limited period, to distribute food in the form in which this kind of relief has hitherto been found most effective. From what I have learned I believe this distribution will be found most beneficial through the medium of soup shops in every part of Ireland; and for this purpose newly constituted relief committees will be provided, whose particular duty will be to superintend the relief so afforded to destitute persons who cannot be admitted into the workhouse. It is proposed to confine the means of procuring this relief to a rate to be levied upon the places: only one half to be levied upon the place, and the other half to be supplied by the country. This, I repeat, is only a temporary measure: it is intended only for places where, more or less, there is misery and destitution—which misery and destitution, it is hoped, will subside as all the works to which I have alluded are brought into play. It is also intended, my Lords, to furnish a loan of another description. One of the objects of the greatest importance in the present state of Ireland is to secure to the utmost extent consistent with the inscrutable designs of Providence the proceeds of the approaching harvest. Very great apprehensions—I am afraid not unfounded apprehensions — are entertained that in some parts of the country due measures have not been taken with this view. In some respects this has arisen from an unaccountable indisposition on the part of labourers to cultivate the soil; but it has also risen, in many instances, from poverty —the poverty of small landowners and farmers, in not being able to furnish the labourers with the means of subsistence while engaged in that task, and not only that, but unable also to procure the seed necessary for the purpose. Now, my Lords, it is proposed, independently of the general loan, and of the permanent measures to which I have alluded, that there shall be a Government loan in connexion with the relief committee, and that certain sums of money shall be advanced, at the rate of 3½ per cent, to be repaid at the end of the present year (that is, at the end of the harvest) to such proprietors as require it, upon no other security than that of the growing crop, for the purpose of enabling them to secure it. Of the importance of some assistance of this sort, and of the necessity of making these advances, I shall convince your Lordships, by reading a few words from a letter from one of the most intelligent officers employed in Ireland, who has had most extensive means of observing the state of things in different countries. This letter was received only this morning, and it will convince your Lordships of the infinite importance of attending to this particular subject, and of applying to it all the stimulus and assistance which we have the power to give. The writer says—

> "The people cry out in their agonies against high prices, but they never think of the extent to which prices very soon will be affected by the present inactivity of the agricultural classes. Now I believe that what would tend more than large importations of grain (be they ever so large) to the reduction of prices, within a short period, would be, that of now making ample preparation for the wants of next year. Although the people themselves do not look far forward, they must consider that the mercantile classes do, and that they necessarily speculate, not only on what is the present value of grain in hand, but on what will be the future value of it, if immediate efforts are not made to show, by the end of May next, a promising state of things for next harvest."

I am sure, my Lords, that the good sense of these observations cannot fail to address itself to your Lordships' minds. You will feel with the writer, as I feel, the necessity of endeavouring to provide for the future, as well as to render present aid, by stimulating and assisting the people to procure the amount of seed necessary to secure next harvest. In saying this, I do not mean the Government ought to engage, as has been sometimes said, in the supply of seed themselves, for the same reason that they ought not to engage in the direct supply of corn. Such a system would have a bad effect; and it is infinitely better, on every ground, that seed should be procured from those channels which are open to all. I have thought it right, after stating to your Lordships the measures which I think will be of great benefit to Ireland, by employing labour in that country, to mention these temporary measures, which will be applicable during the course of the change; and now, my Lords, I beg to resume the consideration of measures of a more permanent character. Here I must venture to call your Lordships' attention to one which has frequently been the subject of inquiry of committees and commissions, and long a subject of observation for speaking in both Houses of Parliament, but which has never yet been brought forward in a tangible shape; I mean what is called the reclamation of waste lands. It has been again and again stated that there exists in Ireland, to a far greater degree than in any other country, an amount of waste lands uncultivated, which might be brought into profitable occupation. I confess myself to be one of those who believe that the amount of these waste lands has been exaggerated. I confess, for one, we do not hold out any hopes, founded upon that statement, of any large or decisive effect; but at the same time, considering how many persons there are convinced, as they state, from personal observation, that there are lands capable of being so reclaimed and cultivated, it is thought right to introduce a measure, the effect of which will be to enable Government to purchase at its value a certain amount of the reclaimable wastes, and to dispose of them again, in some cases, to persons who may be willing to bring them into cultivation, and in others to retain them for public works, for the employment of labour, in the same manner as is done with Crown lands. This I am ready to admit is a measure which ought to be received with infinite caution; and among other reasons for the greatest caution is the necessity of preventing land so reclaimed and settled from becoming the re-formation of the cottier system, and of increasing the number of persons requiring relief and assistance. It will be for your Lordships hereafter to judge whether this particular evil can be duly guarded against. By reclaiming these lands, and dividing them into small farms (by "small" I mean farms comparatively large), and afterwards letting them upon such terms as to guard against any possible subdivision, this evil will be guarded against, and employment will be afforded to a great mass of persons. Such a Bill, my Lords, as this will be introduced, and it will be for your Lordships, and the other House of Parliament, candidly and calmly to consider how far it is applicable to the great object of making an additional market for labour in the cultivation of the soil, and for giving a stimulus to industry by the example which land so cultivated, on the largest and most scientific principles, is calculated to produce. At the same time, I admit my wish to be, that all these objects should be attained to their full extent by that individual enterprise to which I have alluded, and in which I believe that, ultimately, if it can be effected in this way, I hope no assistance will be required from any other source; and the superabundant population of Ireland will not need to look to the restoration of the potato, but to other means of subsistence. There is also another measure, the subject of which has been very much discussed at various times, and which is a question of much importance; I mean the subject of emigration. This subject has engaged the serious attention and consideration of Her Majesty's Government. I wish it were in my power to state any plan which could be safely adopted by which a large impetus could be given to that disposition which exists in all parts of the kingdom, but more particularly in Ireland, to seek employment on the other side the Atlantic. But, my Lords, after much consideration of this subject, it has been thought almost impracticable, without interfering with the current of emigration which now exists, to give any stimulus or any assistance to it in this country; but, on the other hand, we are disposed to think very great attractions might be afforded to emigrants in the shape of some security, when they had crossed the Atlantic, of being immediately placed in a situation to earn their living. The very small sum of money which has been placed at the disposal of Her Majesty's Government for that purpose, small as it is, has been attended with a great and beneficial effect. It is proposed considerably to increase that sum, to increase it to an extent so that any emigrant, to whatever extent it can be proved or presumed emigration will take place in its natural course, after providing due precautions against fraud, may at once upon landing be at the end of his labour, and at the term of his toil—that he may be furnished at once with the means of going to such situation as he shall find, together with his wife and family. On this subject it is not expedient that I should at present enter further. I will, however, state to your Lordships an instance to show, even without any assistance or facilities at all, the natural disposition which there is to emigrate, particularly in Ireland. I find that in the last year 32,000 emigrants landed in Quebec, and 9,700 at St. John's, two-thirds of whom were Irish: and that as compared with the previous year, the increase had been 29 per cent—the total number of emigrants was 110,000. But of course it is in our own colonies alone that we propose to undertake to give, on landing, the great facilities of being immediately sent to their destination and provided with employment. There is, my Lords, another step in the design of improvement, which has frequently been a subject of consideration in Parliament—I mean that of fisheries. Her Majesty's Government have given particular consideration to the subject of fisheries, and in the course of the last few weeks, availing themselves of the means at their disposal, have established upon the coast of Mayo and the adjoining counties three curing stations, with the view of affording the poor fishermen there the means of curing their fish upon the most advantageous terms. We have reason to believe these stations have been attended with very beneficial effects; and it is now proposed to extend them round the whole of the west and southern coasts, so that upon no coast will the fisherman be obliged, as at present, to carry his fish to a great distance before he can find the means of curing it. Nor will our assistance be confined to the establishment of these curing places. It is proposed, for the specific object of promoting fisheries and encouraging fishermen, to give them the means of procuring boats, the necessary tackle, by lending to the landlords small sums for the specific purpose, these sums to be repaid. No person acquainted with Ireland can hesitate to believe there is a large field for the improvement of fisheries, of which the proprietors have not hitherto availed themselves; and without venturing to say to what extent these measures will become a source of benefit, I may venture to predict that they will be of considerable advantage. Before I sit down, I may state, because I wish to put your Lordships wholly in possession of what is proposed by Her Majesty's Government, that Her Majesty's Government are of opinion, looking at the permanent state of Ireland, at the unfortunate effects which will remain long after the pressure of the present year has passed away, and at the changes which we not only expect, but which we must desire to see in the state of society in that country, there should be some addition made, as far as it can be made with safety, to the means of providing against destitution. For years to come, my Lords, I apprehend that in many parts of the country the relief administered in the workhouses will be found unequal to the amount of possible destitution. I am aware that any attempt to provide for this, must be attended with difficulty and danger, against which your Lordships are bound, by every means in your power, to guard. Above all, you know that such a measure, in the nature of what is called out-door relief, would be utterly unsafe: that any general system of out-door relief in that country would be, in other terms, a general confiscation of property there; for the experience of the last few months has demonstrated that the people would have recourse to public charity in preference to making any efforts to obtain their own support, and would use for that purpose unlawful means, which it would be impossible for the local authorities to control. But, my Lords, there are a class of persons for whom, in the event of their not being received into the workhouse in the present state of society, something should be done to secure relief; I mean the aged, the sick, and the infirm. It is proposed that if they cannot be admitted into the workhouse, from its being full, there shall be authority given to the guardians to give them sustenance from the workhouse, in the manner most beneficial to themselves. Connected with this, there must be provision for particular cases of extreme destitution, amounting to the hazard of death; these must be relieved by an officer appointed for that purpose, who should have power to afford relief for the moment, and the guardians should afterwards deal with the case. This subject requires much more attention than it can receive while those other and more pressing measures are under consideration. Nevertheless, I thought it but right to inform your Lordships that such an intention is entertained; the more so, because I believe a great many persons, who might otherwise be disposed to vote the large sums of money, or to make the large advances which I believe the present state of Ireland requires, and which will, so far as respects the future improvement of estates, be repaid, would feel an unwillingness to make those advances unless assured that permanent measures for the improvement of the condition of the poor were devised, and proposed to be carried into effect. Advances have been made to a large extent, and there will be a supplemental advance in the shape of the rate for relieving present destitution to the extent of one-half. There is undoubtedly great pressure, not only upon the poor, but upon every class in Ireland, at the present moment; and, contemplating the further pressure during the change which is about to take place, it appears perfectly impossible to call at once, or at any time, for the repayment of the whole of the large advances already made; and it is proposed to relieve the parties from the repayment of half the moneys so advanced, and to provide that the instalments for the repayment of the other half shall be extended in its commencement from the next spring assizes, and shall not begin till the next summer assizes. I believe that, with relief to that extent, and with the other measures which will be provided, we may anticipate the co-operation of the proprietors, and that ultimately the public will reap the benefit in the easier repayment of the difference, and in what is far more important, promoting the prosperity and the welfare of the country. There is one more measure which I may now refer to, as having been much called for by the proprietors of Ireland, to which it does not appear to me any possible objection can be made. Your Lordships are aware that, in a great many settlements that exist in this country, and possibly in Ireland, there is a power of selling for the purpose of discharging mortgages and incumbrances. It is not an uncommon case, but it is not to be found in all settlements. It has been very much pressed upon the consideration of Her Majesty's Government, to enable parties who have mortgages on their estates to sell their property for the purpose of extinguishing the mortgage. To this request we are prepared to assent; and I hope that Parliament will also accede to a power to enable persons having mortgages or incumbrances on their estates to sell a portion for the purpose of extinguishing the mortgages, and relieving themselves from an incubus which, in the present state of Ireland, creates a great check upon the exertions which the proprietors of Ireland have made for relieving the wants of their neighbours, and improving the condition of the land. This is the last of the measures, of the scope and character of which I am desirous of putting your Lordships into early possession. No person can feel more deeply than I do, that, whatever confidence I may have of the abatement of many of these evils, whatever may be my confidence in the ultimate effect of many of the measures I have enumerated, I can only look with anxiety to the efforts of the proprietors in that country. The Government cannot, for the relief and for the restoration of that country, make themselves the principals; they may indeed show the greatest anxiety, but it is only through the power of the proprietors that any hope of future prosperity can be entertained. The nation can assist the suffering and the afflicted; but it must be to the vigour of their own constitution, and the vitality of their own body, that they must look for permanent success and for permanent relief. The arm may be extended to support the tree which is bending its head to the temporary blast; but it is only to the vigour in the roots of the tree, and to the vitality which it has in itself, that we must look for its permanent restoration, aided for a time by the efforts of a united kingdom; and if we only find a corresponding feeling established elsewhere—if there be a vigorous following up of every means which will be now afforded for adding to the number of labourers, for the employment of labourers, and for creating a race of independent labourers, which hardly now exist in many parts of that country—we shall insure the improvement of the people; and I entertain a sanguine hope, without dissembling the rude and the severe trial through which they must pass, that we shall see an improved state of society, and the establishment of peace and prosperity in that country. It will be my duty to answer any questions which may arise upon these measures. I have candidly explained them; and I trust that in a spirit of patriotism and of unanimity, as far as can be done, your Lordships will turn your minds to these various, important, and, in their nature, most urgent measures. The noble Marquess concluded by moving—

"That there be laid before this House Copies of Correspondence or Extracts from Correspondence with the Board of Works, relating to Distress in Ireland; and also Copies of Correspondence or Extracts from Correspondence with the Commissariat Department, relating to Distress in Ireland."

Lord STANLEY: It is not my intention to interpose between the statements of the noble Marquess and your Lordships' attention for more than a very few moments. After listening to the very able and clear speech of my noble Friend, I adhere even more strongly than I did before to the opinion which I have previously ventured to express—that any attempt to discuss in detail the great and extensive measures now submitted for your Lordships' consideration by Her Majesty's Government, would not only be premature upon the part of your Lordships' House, but that those who, for the first time, hear a large and an extensive plan, composed of various parts, bearing upon each other, and combined with each other for general effect—those, I say, who, for the first time, hear such a plan, must be utterly unable to discuss the merits of the plan as a whole, or to consider in what manner each and every one of the measures may bear upon the others, and upon the general state of society in Ireland. Therefore, my Lords, I do not pretend to enter upon the discussion of all, or any, of those important questions which have been submitted by the noble Marquess. I think, my Lords, the course pursued by Her Majesty's Government—I mean with regard to the manner in which these questions have been submitted to Parliament—is at once a fair and a proper course; they were fully and impartially stated, and in a manner to afford opportunities for such suggestions — offered, I trust, in no unfriendly spirit—as in the course of this discussion may occur to any of your Lordships, and more especially such as those noble Lords who are cognizant of the affairs of Ireland may bring practically to bear upon the subject; and I am certain that there is no Member of your Lordships' House, or of the other House of Parliament, who will not fully appreciate the extent and the magnitude of the calamity that has been so ably and so powerfully described by the noble Marquess in the commencement of his speech, and in which magnitude of the case with which we have to deal rests not only a justification, but a prominent reason, for sinking in the consideration of this question all idea of party strife; so that we shall, one and all, look to the effect which measures of the kind proposed may have on the state of society in Ireland, and on the one object, and the one object alone, that should first engross all our attention—that of devising for the grievous results of that calamity, as far as may be, a present remedy, and of preventing for the future the dangers with which Ireland is threatened on account of it; and at the same time of restoring to a better state the condition of the people of that country. My Lords, I confess—although I do not desire to refer to what has been done already—I cannot avoid feeling that the noble Marquess, in the statement which he has just made, has candidly, and most fully, and most unsparingly, exposed the abuses that have attended the interference of Parliament last Session in this matter—I mean the abuses that have attended the practical application of the Labour-rate Act of last Session—an Act which, as the noble Marquess truly said, has had the effect of withdrawing a great portion of the labouring population of Ireland from profitable occupation, to place them, not merely on unprofitable, but, in many cases, on mischievous work; they have been withdrawn, by the offer of an easy and unlaborious kind of employment, from the laborious description of labour in which they had been heretofore engaged; and this of itself would be almost sufficient condemnation of the measure; but its evil effects have been heightened by the fact that it has been necessary, in order, not to prevent—for that the noble Marquess admitted would be impossible—but to palliate the abuses to which this state of things led —it was necessary to have an establishment of somewhere about eight or nine or ten thousand Government functionaries, nominally to superintend the employment of the people, but who in reality afforded no efficient supervision; and in many cases, I fear, had made away with the money entrusted to them, and employed that money, not to the best advantage, most undoubtedly, but in many cases for their own individual benefit.

The Marquess of LANSDOWNE said, no such circumstance had reached the knowledge of Her Majesty's Government.

Lord STANLEY: I rejoice to hear that the circumstance which I mention has not occurred; but I beg to say that I received a letter the other day from a gentleman in Ireland, in which he stated that under the Act of last year, they were very actively employed in doing mischief on useless roads, under the superintendence of Government *employés*, and at a heavy expense; and that there occurred not unfrequently the disappearance of pay-clerks, treasurers, and other public officers. But I do not intend to enumerate the abuses that have taken place under that Act, because they have been amply admitted by the noble Marquess; and for my part, I fully admit with him that the sooner these enormous abuses come to an end, and more especially as far as the return of the people to their original and regular employment is concerned, the better it will be for the prospects of the country. I perfectly concur with him in feeling that the difficulties and dangers arising under the present system, are for the present moment comparatively as nothing when we look to the probable effects that are likely to accrue from the abandonment of the cultivation of the soil; but, at the same time, I must admit that I do not take the same view of the extent to which this evil has already gone, which has been taken by some noble Lords. A noble Lord the other day talked of the latest period for sowing oats being the commencement of February. That is certainly new information to me, because I conceived that, in Ireland especially, the latter end of March, and from that down to the end of April, and even to a later period, was the period for sowing that crop. It must appear to one not acquainted with Ireland, who finds that none of the crop has been sown as yet, that agricultural labour was very backward and remiss at this period of the year; but noble Lords should not compare Ireland with England in this particular, because in Ireland the greater portion of the corn is spring corn, and not autumn corn as in this country; and in Ireland the greater part of the cultivation of the land is not expected to take place now, but rather in March and April and down to the end of May, these latter being the months when employment in agricultural works should principally take place. I took the liberty to express a strong opinion the other day, that Her Majesty's Government would have done better if they had sacrificed their adherence to the principles of political economy by furnishing corn in the more distressed districts; but what I then stated, the noble Marquess has now confirmed. He says that the question was not a question of money, but a question of food—that there was not food available in many districts of the country, even if money had been forthcoming—that ordinary speculation and enterprise had failed to reach some remote districts—and that where corn and provisions had been collected in these districts, many of which were fifteen or twenty miles from any large markets, they were in the hands of some petty speculators, by whom the corn of the country had been bought up, and who had been making exorbitant profits by the sale. Now, with all respect for the principles of political economy, that is a description of persons with whom, in my judgment, Her Majesty's Government ought not to have altogether abstained from interfering. What I took the liberty of suggesting the other day was this, that in those districts in which ordinary traffic does not exist, there should have been depôts of provisions established by the Government, which, from the conviction that would go abroad, that in them provisions would be sold at rates not lower than a proper investment of capital would require, would, in my firm judgment, have had the effect of drawing forth stores that are now hoarded up, not for the purpose of extravagant consumption, but for the purpose of bringing into the market supplies that can be afforded to be brought in; but which are now withheld, not for remunerative profits, but in the expectation of famine prices. I was told, that this course was not considered to be consistent with the principles of free trade which Her Majesty's Government took upon themselves to adopt. I did not concur in the sufficiency of that answer; but I concluded that the view taken by Her Majesty's Government had been acted upon by them. To-night, however, to my great astonishment, the noble Marquess comes down, and instead of defending the non-interference system, he said the Government had been pursuing, and intended to pursue, a system of interference fully to the extent which I had ventured to express an opinion that they ought to have done. The noble Marquess tells us that they have established depôts in different parts of the country where they had thought them necessary; that they had established 950 local committees; and that to every one of these committees they had afforded assistance. [The Marquess of LANSDOWNE: Not in food.] The noble Marquess says, the relief was not given in food, but in the means of purchasing food; but I confess, it appears to me, that, in places where the difficulty to be met did not consist so much in the want of money as in the want of food, it is a question whether it would not have been better to send what was not there, namely, food, and that a supply of provisions would have been a more beneficial and economical mode of relieving the distress, than furnishing grants of money where money was not of use. But then, again, the noble Marquess, and my noble Friend the First Lord of the Admiralty, in answer to a noble Earl, a noble Friend of mine on this side of the House, stated, that they had deliberately considered the question aye or no, whether they should employ Her Majesty's ships of war in carrying provisions to the distressed parts of Ireland, and that they had come to the decision that it was unnecessary to do so, because there was abundance of tonnage to be got without employing Her Majesty's ships of war. To my mind that answer seemed inconsistent with the other measure to which your Lordships unanimously gave your assent this evening, namely, the Bill for suspending the navigation laws. But, from the answer given by the noble Marquess tonight, it appears that Her Majesty's ships of war and steamers have been, and are, actually employed in carrying provisions from port to port, and thus interfering, undoubtedly, with the ordinary course of trade—introducing a system of interference on the part of the Government with the ordinary course of commerce, which, no doubt, has worked beneficially, but which is clearly contrary to that principle of non-interference which, as I said before, I took the liberty of stating the other night Her Majesty's Government had, in my judgment, carried to an undue extent. I will not, as I have already stated, enter at present into a consideration of any of the great questions to which, as permanent measures, the noble Marquess adverted, as likely to be brought forward by Her Majesty's Government. The noble Marquess does not lay any great stress, as far as I can perceive, on the practical co-operation of the landlords; and it appears, that, though Her Majesty's Government did not feel it to be their duty to interfere with private enterprise, they are to become, in themselves, purchasers of land in Ireland, for the purpose of again selling it or letting it to other persons on lease, with the intention further of controlling the terms on which these leases are to be permitted. To every degree, and in every district, they are about taking on themselves the duties of landowners on the one hand, and of land speculators on the other. As to emigration, I entirely concur with the noble Marquess in thinking that it is exceedingly difficult to introduce any plan of extensive emigration, by aid given in this country, which would have any practical or tangible effect on the extent of the population of Ireland. I shall not enter into that question, at present, very largely, though it is one that I have very often and very extensively considered, as it was my duty to do. I am aware of the advantages attending the advancement of small sums to persons after arriving in Canada, for the purpose of assisting them to proceed to the spot which they wished to occupy; but I must remind the noble Marquess, that the degree of success attending the measure, has arisen from this, namely, that the sum applicable for such purposes was known to be of limited amount; and that it was never to be employed except in case of known and absolute destitution; and, even then, that it was to be applied only for the purpose of assisting them in going to join their friends, whom they had made previous arrangements for reaching before leaving their own country. But from the moment that it becomes known that any individuals arriving in the colony shall have a claim upon the public purse, from that moment, I fear, the claims will be increased enormously; and that no person, or, at least, hardly any person, will go out on their own resources. I am afraid that the extent to which increased emigration will be carried on under this system, if it be adopted, will be by no means commensurate with the expense which we shall have to pay for it. Again, with regard to the poor law and to the fisheries, both most extensive questions, I will also abstain from offering any opinion at present; but, I believe, that of all the measures enumerated by the noble Marquess, that which is likely to be an efficient and working measure is the last to which he referred, and on which he laid much less stress than on the others—I mean that by which it is proposed to give facilities to landed proprietors in Ireland to relieve their estates by the sale of such portion of their lands as may be necessary to clear off incumbrances upon them. I believe that the object sought to be effected by this measure is one of the utmost importance, because the effect will be not only to relieve existing calls on landlords in Ireland, but to produce a result which must be admitted to be the most important for Ireland at the present moment—namely, the drawing of a greater amount of capital into Ireland, by bringing upon large properties two unincumbered proprietors, instead of one proprietor so incumbered as to render him unable to discharge his duties on half, still less on the whole, of his property. There is one of the proposed measures on which I think the noble Marquess has, on the other hand, laid more stress than I think it is fairly entitled to. He appears to expect a very great and almost an immediate effect to be produced by the measure under which money is to be offered to landlords for improvements at 3½ per cent. I do not at all doubt but that if such an offer were made to the landlords of England—that if the landlords of this country were offered advances of money at lower rates, whatever they might be, than they were able to command on their own individual security in the money market—it would be very likely to be found a valuable boon; but there are circumstances which I think ought to be borne in mind, which I fear place Irish landlords not in the same position as the English landlords, as I took the liberty of stating to your Lordships the other day. If a landlord in England lays out money in the improvement of his land, whether that land be in the possession of tenants at will, or tenants holding under lease, he is in the first place perfectly certain of the co-operation of the tenants, and he feels no difficulty in obtaining from them an increase of rent corresponding to the amount of money laid out in improvements; or else if the tenant at will refuses to pay such increase, the landlord would find no difficulty in obtaining the support of public opinion in getting rid of the unimproving tenant, for the purpose of substituting an improving tenant in his place. That, however, is not the case in Ireland; and the landlord in that country who is induced to borrow money from the Government for the improvement of his estate, will, I fear, find, in too many cases, no part of his estate so much under his own control as to enable him beneficially to apply the money with a prospect of recovering the interest of it in the shape of an increased rent. I do not refer merely to cases where the tenants hold under leases, but where they are nominally tenants at will; and who, if they are offered the money, or to have the work done for them on the condition of paying an increased rent, will tell the landlord that they beg to decline the offer—that they are quite willing to have the work done for them, but on this condition, that as long as they choose to remain on the land, remain they shall, and that as to paying more rent, they will not. I speak from experience. I know that such is the state of things in which some landlords, who are most desirous of giving assistance to their tenants, are placed. On these grounds, therefore, I fear that there is reason to think that we should not entertain over-sanguine expectations of the results of improvements to be effected under the measure proposed by Her Majesty's Government. I have not heard, in the Government plan, any reference made to one circumstance that ought to be borne in mind in every measure intended to advance the improvement of landed estates in Ireland—I mean the cases in which lands are held under old leases by occupiers under a middle-man, where, in point of fact, the owner of the soil is deriving little or no benefit at present from his property, and where any improvement to be effected would not go to the benefit of the head landlord, but of the middle-man, though on the head landlord, as it appears to me, will rest the responsibility of maintaining and supporting the poor peasantry belonging to the estate, and brought there against his will by the promise of exorbitant rents to the middle-man. Your Lordships may say that this is a state of things resulting from improvidence. It is so; but it is of very old date. I am myself labouring under such a state of things, having property under leases granted as long ago as the year 1780; and during the whole of the time that has since elapsed, the middle-man having the original lease has been stocking the estate with a race of paupers. It might be said that a provision against sub-letting might have been made in the lease; but in point of fact, nothing is so difficult as to carry into operation effectually any provision against this practice; and as an instance that such is the case, I will mention a case that has occurred to myself. A tenant of mine was desirous of handing over a farm to another person. I demurred; and on reference to his lease, it was found that there was a positive prohibition against assigning the farm. I took the opinion of counsel on the matter; and on the examination of the lease these were the words contained in it: "The tenant is debarred from selling, alienating, assigning, or otherwise than by will disposing of his farm." Now, it was clearly the intention to prevent the tenant from parting with his farm; but it was the opinion of the counsel that there was nothing in the lease to hinder the tenant from cutting up the whole farm and subletting it to paupers, without any possibility of interference on my part. Under these circumstances, I need hardly say, that I made no further objection to the highly respectable man to whom the tenant wished to dispose of his farm. But I only mention this to show the exceeding difficulty of guarding against dangers which in England it would be very easy to remedy—of providing against having a population on your property over whom you have no control, and yet the whole of whose maintenance is thrown upon you. I hope Her Majesty's Government, in considering the means to be adopted in placing additional burdens on Irish property, for the purpose of improving that property, will take into consideration what portion ought to fall, not only on the head landlord, but on those who for a very considerable time will derive the whole benefit accruing from such improvements. One more caution I wish to impress upon the Government. It being agreed that one object of all plans for the amelioration of Ireland is the introduction of fresh capital into the country; and another object, that the people should be diverted from the system of petty holdings, with a view of raising up a set of men who should be dependent on wages entirely, and not accidentally and occasionally, for their permanent subsistence; and another object, that assistance should be given to the landlords to lay out capital on the land: I agree with the noble Marquess that we ought to do what we can through the present proprietors, and by encouraging and sustaining them, by advances if you please, to improve the land; but I think it ought to be the object of the Government to facilitate the introduction of additional capital on sufficient security, namely, by advances to such bodies as may be enabled to devote it to the employment of the people. I speak of railway companies; and, looking to the present state of Ireland, and to the difficulties attending investments in Ireland, from the political insecurity of the country, I think that advances ought to be made by the Government on indisputable security, to these companies. There is no more legitimate mode of conveying the Government assistance to that country; for it would be a measure which, in the first place, will assist and facilitate the introduction into Ireland of large masses of private capital which would be expended in such undertakings only of which the proprietors entertained good hopes that they would prove reproductive; and in the next, these companies would have the power of supervising and overlooking the expenditure of the capital entrusted to them in a manner which no Government *employés* could effect, as the latter would not, as the others would, be desirous of obtaining the most work possible for their money. I must say I think this plan is practicable, and if practicable that it is desirable for the Government to take it into their consideration with a view to find out whether they could not beneficially offer loans to such railway companies as had already been sanctioned by Parliament, as well as to such as might be hereafter sanctioned by the Government Board for the supervision of railways. I believe that a measure of this kind—not proposed for the purpose of adding to the capital of those companies, but for the purpose of calling more immediately into effect that capital, and bringing it sooner to bear upon the condition of the country and the increase of the means of employment, and in order to encourage those companies to employ a greater amount of labour than otherwise they would employ—I believe that such a measure would tend greatly to diminish the temporary difficulties of Ireland, and would not ultimately be attended with any loss to this country. I do not pretend, on the occasion of bringing forward those measures, to offer any different plan to that of the Government; but to this I would call their attention, as being one to which they might most wisely and beneficially look for the introduction of additional capital into Ireland—and capital which would furnish additional employment—which would be most important, particularly at this time, when they were withdrawing the present means of employment; and which would not have the effect of taking the people from agricultural employment, on the ground of the work being either less laborious or better paid. I will not go further into the question. I think that the noble Marquess has taken the most beneficial course in the manner in which he has stated the whole plan of the Government; and I can, I think, assure him that when these measures come to be discussed they will be received with no disposition to find captious objections, but with every desire to give them a full and fair consideration.

Lord BROUGHAM hoped the noble Marquess would state what number of millions sterling he expected would be wanted for this service, for the soup kitchens namely, the out-door relief, the fisheries, the loans for all parts of the plan, in short, except what he thought by far the best part of it, namely, for setting free settled estates in Ireland. He wished to know the amount of the loan that it would be necessary for the Government to contract, in order to meet this vast expenditure, and also how they proposed to furnish the interest of it, and whether that interest was to be paid by the people of this country by an increase of the taxes already bestowed on them by their Government, and whether the property tax was to be increased? He had heard that morning an estimate, stating the amount that would be required at 15,000,000*l.* sterling. He quite agreed with the noble Marquess, that the Government ought not to be corn dealers or corn speculators, or corn millers, or corn manufacturers; but then he went further than the Government, and said they ought not to be loan contractors nor lenders of money. If in any capacity a Government was more disagreeable to the people than another, it was as a creditor. Government was generally a debtor, as most people knew, but he knew what Government being a creditor meant; it generally ended in an extent in the Exchequer. Now, the people of this country were to raise all this money to lend again, but they had not got it themselves; they must go to the Stock Exchange to their brother lenders, to the Jews, their rival profession; and whether the Irish landlords would pay back the loan he knew not, but this he knew, that we must pay it. How to pay it was then the question. Indirect taxation had reached its limit; directly as more was put on in one department, the revenue fell off in another. Nothing but direct taxation was left. It was now admitted that the Labour-rate Act had failed, and worse than failed, for it had proved to be a negative quantity, decidedly injurious and perfectly mischievous. He had heard, two days ago, the case of a gentleman who, when he was assessed for the improvement of a road which he had leading from the high road to his house, and wholly within his own grounds, asked what was the amount at which he had been assessed; and on being told 180*l.* immediately wrote a check for the money, preferring to get rid of the matter in that way rather than to have his road improved. The Labour-rate Act of last Session was totally inadequate to the purposes for which it was passed, and excessively mischievous, for under it there were employed, in order to superintend some 300,000 labourers, 10,000 Government servants, all more or less engaged in the act of jobbing.

The Marquess of LANSDOWNE: Four hundred thousand.

Lord BROUGHAM: No, no. 10,000 men were employed superintending 300,000 labourers.

The Marquess of LANSDOWNE begged to assure the noble Lord that he was misinformed. There were 400,000 persons employed. The noble Lord should recollect that the numbers had increased since the returns to which he had alluded had been made.

Lord BROUGHAM admitted that they might have increased. Of course they had increased, and of course they were still increasing from day to day. But, at all events, they were employing one functionary to superintend every thirty or forty labourers—to superintend the labour of men who were engaged improving (as was called) the property of men who would willingly pay large sums to have those improvements left undone. The Labour-rate Act had worked very mischievously. But they should take into account that numberless persons must be employed to prevent abuses under the plan for granting loans, in order to avoid the danger of fraud. That would form a new staff in addition to the 10,000 before employed by Government; and the Government, besides, was to become a land jobber as well as a money jobber. Another evil consequence would arise out of the land jobbing part of the system, which was, that when the Government, with its long purse, would come into the market, the lands would rise in value, unless, indeed, they were prepared to fix a maximum price beyond which they would not go. They would make the same havoc with the land as they had made with the roads. And they would be obliged to have a staff of bailiffs soon, as they had a staff of overseers now. It had been too much the fashion to quote as the happiest condition of a country the time

> "When every rood of land maintained its man."

But it was the curse of Ireland that every half rood of ground had been maintaining its man. With regard to the question of the poor law, he should like to see extended to Ireland a good and efficient poor law—not the abused poor law of England, for against the introduction of that he had fought the battle night after night in that House, even when it was attempted to introduce it in a modified system. To introduce or allow to be introduced into Ireland the present system of the English poor law, would be more injurious to the sister kingdom than to any other country under the sun. Let their Lordships look to the dreadful consequences of the present condition of the poor law in those countries. Let them look at the flood of Irish destitution poured in upon some of the communities of England. What was the condition of Liverpool? Within five days there were 2,056 women and 897 children landed there from Ireland, and the total number of paupers from Ireland landed there during those five days was 5,200 odd; not, he should beg to observe, brought over, as a noble Friend of his had stated the other night, as a speculation to obtain freights for the vessels, but as seekers for relief from the operation of the English poor law, for one of the vessels that brought some of those poor persons had 178*l.* of freight on board. One vessel from Sligo brought over and landed in one day 750 paupers. The consequence had been most lamentable to Liverpool, and they were groaning under the infliction in that once flourishing town. By a return which he (Lord Brougham) had received on Friday, it appeared that on Monday last 18,095 Irish paupers were relieved by the poor-law officers of Liverpool, in addition to the poor of the town. On Tuesday there were 19,200 and odd. On Wednesday there were 19,400 odd; and on Thursday last, the day before his correspondent, who was an official person, addressing him (Lord Brougham) in his official capacity, had made the communication to him, there were 22,095 Irish paupers, in addition to the permanent paupers of Liverpool, who received relief. The consequences were alarming in another point of view, besides the present hardship to the locality. People feared that the present would form no exception to the rule, that pestilence follows in the wake of famine. He could not speak in terms of too much warmth regarding the exertions used by the poor-law guardians of Liverpool. But that town was not the only sufferer. Glasgow was represented as being in a still worse condition. When their Lordships looked at these facts, and weighed their consequences, they would agree that some regulation was required, and should be made, for the purpose of throwing the Irish poor upon the resources of Ireland for support, so as to prevent the abuses of the English poor law. He began to bring his mind most reluctantly to the belief that the mischief should be met. But it must not be "Ireland for the Irish," whilst there was anything to be fed upon, and "England for the Irish," when there was none—that would be burning the candles on both ends. No, no, gentlemen should make their election. They could not have it both ways. He had the deepest sympathy for the suffering, for the destitute poor; but there was one class of persons for whom he had no sympathy. They were the place-hunters—the staff inspectors, the supervisors, the public work inspectors, the private work inspectors, the state farmers, and all the numberless host of well-paid and willing functionaries, whose private profits rose up to their imagination the moment those great public measures were spoken of. They were about to apply millions to the relief of the sister kingdom. If the interest of the money to be raised was to be paid by additional taxation, he hoped that the sister kingdom would have some regard to her sister England, and that the property tax, the assessed taxes, and the income tax, would be no longer for the English only. He did not approve, either, of the system of exempting the man of 140*l.* a year from the income-tax. It was quite absurd to put forward the smallness of income or of property as a rule for exemption from taxation. It was as if the man who had an income of only 140*l.* a year should not pay for its protection at least in the same ratio as the man of thousands. He hoped that the distinction would never be taken again. He hoped that the line of exemption from taxation would not be drawn down the middle of the British Channel, or at an income of 150*l.* per annum. As to the measures proposed, the more distinct they kept the temporary ones from those that were intended to be permanent, the better. As to the permanent measures, they need not be brought forward with the same haste as the temporary, which were demanded to meet the pressing exigencies of the occasion. There was no need for pressing forward the permanent measures this year. But the second caution he should give them was, that they should take care and not make the effects of some of their temporary measures permanent by inducing, through them, bad habits that would outlive the time of their adoption. They should take care not to induce a demoralising principle amongst the landlords of Ireland; but, by taking good security for the money advanced, and so far ensuring its repayment, it was to be hoped that those landlords, upon freeing their property from the mortgages about to be raised upon them, would not mortgage them again. There was one mode of improving the condition of the Irish people which he thought deserved most serious attention. He meant the fisheries. When they recollected that on the west coast of Ireland there was, wasted and unprofitable, ready to be brought into immediate use an unlimited supply of food, infinitely more nutritious than the potato; he should say that a better mode of exertion could not be made, nor could a better mode of outlay for the money about to be advanced be pointed out, than the giving assistance to the fishermen. The mode in which they could be aided more than by any other method would be, besides lending to them nets and tackle, by sending amongst them skilful fishermen, whose example might be useful. He had seen in the Mediterranean examples of the incapacity of some of the people on the coast to take advantage of the abundance of fish in their vicinity; but the moment the Genoese fishermen made their appearance amongst them, the supplies to the markets became abundant, and they swarmed with the finest fish. It was the superior skill of the Genoese that caused the difference; and he feared that there was a want of skill amongst the fishermen on the western coast of Ireland in the modes of taking fish, and an ignorance equal to that of those unskilful Mediterranean fishermen of whom he had before spoken. He should, therefore, advocate the sending amongst them of some skilful men who might induce them to improve their mode of fishing; he did not mean fishing for the purpose of curing or salting, but merely for the purpose of supplying fresh fish to the markets. Before sitting down he would beg to recall their Lordships' attention to the great point which should form the most prominent feature of their deliberations at present—the want of food. It was food that the Irish people wanted most of all immediately. The effects of the measures proposed for their future benefit would not be visible for a year or more at the nearest, but in the meantime they should be supplied with food. They were dying by thousands. They were dying daily, and food should be supplied for them. There was one measure which he recollected had been adopted in the year 1800, when there was severe distress and famine. It was a solemn league and covenant entered into amongst all consumers of bread, fish, flesh and vegetables to consume as little bread as possible. He perfectly recollected when the loaf used to be brought to the table, but no one was allowed to cut it but the master of the house, who cut a very small portion for each individual.

The MARQUESS of LANSDOWNE observed in a low voice across the Table, that the people had then potatoes in abundance.

LORD BROUGHAM admitted it, but still he thought it possible for such another league to be formed, and a bond entered into that consumers of fish and flesh should use as little bread and potatoes as possible, and no ornamental dishes of pastry whatsoever during the continuance of the distress; for ornamental pastry wasted a large quantity of flour that was needed for bread for the poor. He was quite sure that were such an agreement entered into, all the money given by them in subscriptions would do little, compared with the good that would arise out of it. The price of bread would be, he would not say lowered, because that was scarcely to be expected, but it would be kept from rising higher than it was at present. It would, by putting the wealthier classes upon short allowance, avert the coming of famine. There was another part of the agreement entered into in the year 1800, which was, that none but stale bread should be used. The agreement was, that no bread should be used under any circumstances until twenty-four hours after it had been baked. Very great advantage had been derived from the plan, and he begged leave strongly to recommend its adoption. In conclusion, he begged again to put the question with which he had commenced to his noble Friend (the Marquess of Lansdowne), whether he had made any calculation as to the amount of supplies which would be required for the purpose of carrying into effect the measures proposed for the relief of Ireland? His noble Friend had, probably, no means of ascertaining the fact, and, in that case, he, of course, did not wish to press it unnecessarily.

The MARQUESS of LANSDOWNE said, that it was impossible to say how much might be required.

The EARL of DESART (who was very imperfectly heard) agreed with the noble Lord near him (Lord Stanley) that it was impossible to give any decided opinion respecting the measures after so brief an attention paid to them. He rose merely to state to their Lordships some facts, the truth of which, and the painful scenes passing in his country, he could vouch. If he spoke of some of the measures of the Government with any reprehension, he did so with regret; at the same time, he must express his sense of the evils of some of these measures, without denying the anxiety of the Government to relieve the present condition of the Irish. When the calamity was first heard of (in August)—

when it was known that the food of three millions of the Irish people was totally destroyed, some provision should have been made by the Government to relieve their distress. He was far from saying that the Government should have ransacked the world for provisions, or that the Government should have turned merchant; but he was prepared to say that, by a cautious and prudent mode of proceeding, they should have collected grain, and established depôts of food where scarcity was most apprehended and there were no stores. If this had been done, he should not have had to read to their Lordships a letter from Skibbereen—in one of the most distressed parts of Ireland—of a most painful character. The letter was from a noble friend of his, who had taken upon himself to ascertain the perfect truth of the statements. [The noble Earl read the letter, which drew a lamentable picture of the heartrending scenes at Skibbereen, arising from want of food, scarcity of employment, lowness of wages (8*d.* a day), disease, and wretched lodging of the people.] No one would believe the extent of the horrors at this place who did not see them, yet they could be verified upon oath; and he did think that the Government of a country like this, with such resources at its command, ought to have made some provision for arresting such a calamity. The state of the people with regard to labour was lamentable. There were, at the lowest, 350,000 families who had been used to drag on a sort of scrambling existence almost without money, and without being a burden to the landlords. They lived in this manner: each family scraped as much manure as they could, sufficient to manure one or two roods of land, for which they paid no rent, and they planted this small piece of land with potatoes enough to support the family during the winter. Meantime, they contrived to scrape together money sufficient to buy a pig, which they fed with the refuse potatoes. Thus they went on from year to year, dragging a miserable existence. But this year all their potatoes were cut off, and 350,000 families, making at an average of six persons to each family, 2,100,000 persons, were left destitute. Reckoning the loss of these 350,000 families at 20*l.* each, the loss would be 7,000,000*l.*, which was thrown upon the small landlords. Now, what was the condition of the landlords? With resources diminished after the calamity of the preceding year, they were called on to meet this crisis, to bear this enormous additional burden. They would have to support not only their usual amount of labourers, but also many of the small farmers, who would act as a double drain—diminishing by nonpayment of the rent the very incomes taxed for their support. This was manifestly enough to exhaust their resources, and they therefore had to look for fresh means to enable them to meet this enormous charge of 7,000,000*l.* on the rental of a country valued at from 12,000,000*l.* to 13,000,000*l.* For this purpose they turned their attention to any facilities that might be offered them for borrowing money for useful improvements, affording a fair prospect of providing a fund for its repayment. Their efforts were frustrated. The provisions of the Million Act were declared not to apply to life interest. Other Acts were calculated only for extensive works, such as deepening rivers and streams, which could not be carried on at this season, and they were ultimately compelled to have recourse to public works, useless and ruinous as they were. There was indeed an attempt made to mend the Act by the famous letter of Mr. Labouchere. This came out late in October—presentments were made under its provisions throughout the country in the beginning of November; but a circular from the Board of Works published in December (why the delay?) announced that all these presentments were informal. Fresh sessions were called, and other presentments made, many of which were now being carried out, though the expenses of the staff, and in many cases the inefficient way in which the work was carried on, seemed likely to eat up all the profits. This measure, however, worked very unequally and injuriously. Suppose A and B were joint proprietors of an estate, and a baronial assessment was made for 1,000*l.*; A took 500*l.*, but B said, "No, I will have nothing to do with the other 500*l*;" A would have to pay on 500*l.* and 250*l.* of the other 500*l.* These difficulties made this letter to a great degree inoperative, and insufficient to supersede the unproductive system of road-making. The public works there still proceeded, and frightful were the mischiefs they occasioned. They tended to paralyse labour, ruin the fisheries, and demoralize the people. He had known instances of fishermen drawing up their boats upon the beach, and declaring that labour on the roads was more profitable. Farmers found it advantageous to discourage labour on their land, and to send the people to their works, and in some instances they positively refused to employ labourers: there was a kind of struggle for English money. Let not their Lordships think for a moment that he asked them to give money to Ireland. England ought to be generous; but, anyhow, Ireland should be honest. As far as they could, the landlords of Ireland ought to make repayment; but if England, regardless of their protection, heedless of their remonstrances, did, with injudicious liberality, make advances of money, and applied it to useless works, England owed them a fair reparation. Looking from the past to the present and the future, the landlords were ready to cooperate with the Government; and he felt that the Government were anxious on their part to redeem Ireland from its social misery, and he was gratified to see Englishmen turning their attention to the social condition of Ireland. The proposed measures would go to the root of many of the ills of that country. He thought altogether they were calculated to do a great deal of good. All the landlords asked was that they should be protected, not from their fair share of the burden, but from being utterly swamped by paupers, and ruined by useless labour. If the landlords were ruined, the property would not be confiscated, but annihilated; and Ireland, deprived of her natural proprietors, and covered with a race of squatters, would be more miserable than she was at present. "As for squatting," (continued the noble Lord,) "I consider it one of the very greatest evils of Ireland, and no Englishman can appreciate the difficulties of its prevention. If in estates well cultivated, and immediately under the landlord's eye, it requires the utmost vigilance, as it does, to prevent divisions of land, and erection of new houses; to do so becomes next to impossible in the more remote and wilder districts where such close supervision is impossible. I will mention a plan merely as a suggestion—that in cases where a constable shall see the commencement of one of the mud hovels usually erected by this class of people, he shall be empowered to demand a certificate, showing permission on the part of the landlord or agent, and on failure of this to stop the work. Before concluding, I wish to say one word on an expression which fell from the noble Lord opposite, concerning the proposed extension of the poor law—I mean out-door relief. Whatever the Government do, let them beware of offering a bribe to unprofitable idleness among a people too willing to avail themselves of it." The noble Lord concluded by thanking their Lordships for the hearing they had given him; it was one of the many proofs he had seen that night, that they were really anxious to grapple with the evils of Ireland; that they considered the Irish question in the light of a national question; and that England must suffer in the suffering and degradation of the people of Ireland.

The Earl of DEVON said, that, on hearing the observations of his noble and learned Friend (Lord Brougham), he thought that his noble and learned Friend was totally forgetful of many things that had passed under his own eye, and with his own concurrence. Any person hearing his noble and learned Friend, and not knowing anything of the previous legislation for Ireland, would imagine that Her Majesty's Ministers were for the first time proposing an unheard-of remedy for the assistance of Ireland. But what were the circumstances under which the assistance was now proposed? As his noble Friend (Lord Desart), who justly spoke the feelings of all honest landlords in Ireland, had said, they admitted that the obligation rested upon the land to provide for the people that lived upon the land, and that the landlords were ready and willing to discharge all the duties and obligations incidental to their position. But the difficulty was, that the landlord did not always represent the land; and the question was, how to fulfil this obligation that existed upon the land. In former years, under the Government of Lord Grey, of which his noble and learned Friend (Lord Brougham) was a member, the Board of Public Works was first established. It was then thought desirable to enable the landlords of Ireland to fulfil this obligation to which he had referred, and to advance them money for the purpose, when, in consequence of their position, and of having a limited estate, they could not borrow money themselves. When the first Public Works Act passed, the object was to enable landlords to borrow money for the very purpose for which it was now proposed to extend those loans, viz., for the improvement, the reformation, the embanking, draining, or other permanent improvement of land. That was the principle which the Parliament of that day had adopted at the suggestion of the Government of which his noble and learned Friend (Lord Brougham) was a member.

He (the Earl of Devon) could only say he thought his noble and learned Friend (Lord Brougham) had shown on this occasion a want of that industry which he generally applied for the purpose of understanding the subject on which he was speaking. He had laid down certain propositions with reference to which they did not much differ; but he had shown an ignorance of the actual circumstances and facts of the case upon which they were called to decide. His noble Friend who had just spoken (the Earl of Desart) had stated to them the situation of a large class of the poorer people of Ireland, and he (the Earl of Devon) need not repeat the statement. It was hardly credible to Englishmen, or to those who did not know the exact position of the different classes occupying land in Ireland—they hardly could understand in what manner the failure of the potato affected all classes in Ireland. In the dealings between the labourer and the farmer, money scarcely ever passed; the potato was the whole means of barter, and the land producing the potatoes. The farmer who was called upon to pay money to his labourers, or not to cultivate his land, would choose the latter alternative; the Irish farmer had, not merely now, but at all times, a great aversion to laying out money in paying labourers: he had not arrived at the knowledge of how remunerative well-paid labour on the land would be to him. He was not now able to pay the labourer in the way he had been accustomed, and, consequently, large masses of people were this year thrown out of employment, who in former years had employment. The farmer himself having sold his crop, would rather place the money in the savings' bank than pay it away in labour, and that might account for the fact, not otherwise very intelligible, of the deposits in those institutions being so very large at the present moment. There were many instances in which the farmer had received the money for his crop, which he had well sold, had placed the money in the savings' banks rather than pay for the labour he wanted, and afterwards had thrown himself on the public works. But much as the Labour-rate Act of last Session had cost himself; abused, and justly, as it might be; he (the Earl of Devon) could not, for one, join in the general outcry that it had been of no use. On the contrary, he believed—passed as it was under peculiar circumstances, and at a moment when some immediate step was necessary—that it was of very great use. In speaking on this subject, he could only speak of that which had fallen under his own observation — others of his noble Friends could state what they had seen; he (the Earl of Devon) could only speak of what fell under his own observation. He was not answerable for taking any part in the passing of that Act, for he had gone to Ireland before it was introduced; but he did not find on the records of what passed on the discussion of that Act, that there was any great opposition made to it, or that any person who now perceived so strongly the evils arising from it, had then made any suggestion as to what should be done. At that time what was the position of the Irish landlords, and in what state was the country? A great number of persons required employment. At that time the demand was not so much for food as for employment by which the people might be enabled to buy food. By the Labour-rate Act the landlords were enabled to borrow money, if they pleased, to execute work on their lands; but it was thought that beyond that something further was necessary, and that was employment at some works which individual landlords could not afford to undertake. The works had been called mischievous; but why were presentments for such works made? There was a district with which he was connected, and he did not believe that one hundred perches of useless road had been made in that district, because the individuals at the sessions had taken infinite pains to select the works. He (the Earl of Devon) held in his hand a letter from a most intelligent agent who resided on that property, in which he stated to him that he attributed the tranquillity that existed there very much to the opportunity he had of placing in employment, immediately after the passing of the Labour-rate Act, a very large number of the unemployed population of that district. He (the Earl of Devon) did not think it fair to state so positively as had been stated that the Labour-rate Act had been altogether a useless measure. He was quite confident it was not altogether useless; and he felt that without some measure of that nature at the particular moment, much more disastrous consequences would have ensued. He begged to make one suggestion to the Government. It had been explained, that if one person could take up the whole taxation for productive works which fell upon an electoral division, he might do so, and be called upon for nothing further. But these electoral divisions were too large for such purposes, and he would recommend that a smaller electoral division should be taken, and that if two or three persons living in the same townland agreed to bear that portion of the baronial cess which belonged to such townland, then that they should be exempted from further taxation. He happened to know how it was this proposition had at one time been received by Her Majesty's Government with a great deal of distrust. But some gentlemen in Ireland had to answer for it, because the proposition that was addressed by one class of persons to the Government was of a very different nature. The proposition was, that if they employed and paid for the employment of persons resident on their own townlands, that they should be then exempt from further taxation. That was a different thing from what he had mentioned, for that would be a premium to the man who had cleared his land, and who, therefore, would have only a small number to employ. That was not the proposition which he (the Earl of Devon) now made, and to which he hoped Her Majesty's Government would not refuse to assent; and in any future arrangement, when an assessment was (suppose for 10,000*l.*) to be laid on a barony, and that 1,000*l.* of that should belong to certain three or four townlands, part of that barony, that he, or two or three with him, might take that proportion of the assessment on them, and that then they should not be called upon to pay any more, and that they should apply to the townland the same principle that Mr. Labouchere's letter proposed to apply to the electoral division. It was said that the proposition with respect to the waste lands was one not likely to be accompanied with good results. He (the Earl of Devon) was rather more sanguine. He had some experience on the subject, and he knew that the application of capital to waste lands might be usefully and profitably made. There was a way in which he conceived the process could be better carried on than by the interference of the Government. It was suggested that it was desirable for Government to make loans of money to railway companies; and it might or might not be desirable to do so; but if there were any persons of responsible character willing to risk some of their own capital in the reformation of waste lands, he suggested that assistance should be given to them by the Government, on proper security. That would be a more economical and efficient way of laying out money than if the work were undertaken on the part of the Government itself. The great cause now of the distress was the failure of the potato crop; but they took a superficial view of the question who did not look deeper than that. The failure of the potato crop was a great and enormous aggravation of the evils of Ireland; but there was an evil under which, more or less, at all times Ireland had suffered, and that evil was the inadequacy of the employment, or the supply of employment, to the demand. There had been a greater supply of labour than any demand the country could afford. Undoubtedly many of the measures now in contemplation would tend to create a much greater demand for labour; but he doubted much that to the full extent it would effectually meet the evil. As to the question of emigration, he concurred in the propriety of the view taken by Her Majesty's Government. He thought that any attempt to give assistance by advancing money here to take persons out would lead to abuse; but, unquestionably, any assistance they could give in preparing a location for persons when they arrived abroad would be most useful. If assistance were given for emigration in that way, the landlords of Ireland might find the means to make it more like colonisation than emigration—that is, to enable persons of various classes to emigrate together; and persons of different grades and classes of society might go out with the certainty that when they got at the other side of the Atlantic, they would meet in a sphere in which their respective energies might be usefully employed, and where they might obtain that livelihood which they were unable to obtain in their own country. There was great room for exertion on the part of the Irish gentlemen themselves on that subject, and he hoped it would be taken up by them. With respect to the poor law, it might be much better that it was not much discussed while they were suffering under the present pressure. But they must be prepared to have such a poor law as would provide the means of rescuing from want those persons who could not, under any other circumstances, provide for themselves. The law must be plain, and the landlords of Ireland must be prepared to submit to the law; and he (the Earl of Devon), for one, should certainly give his best attention to the details of any measure of the description.

He could give his testimony to the propriety of the measures, so far as he could understand them, which the noble Marquess had propounded. It was said that all labour had been drawn to public works; but measures were taken to prevent that, which in many instances were successful, namely, the refusal to employ any persons on public works except at task-work. There were some persons who at first were very angry, and determined not to work by task, who afterwards, however, took the task-work. He was not one of those who regarded with so much alarm the non-cultivation of the land up to the present time. His own experience of the country warranted him in saying that in the months of December and January the Irish peasants were almost always totally idle; during those months but very little agricultural labour was attempted. The operations of agriculture were actively carried on during the three months immediately succeeding—February, March, and April; and if during those months the peasantry were to continue this year in a state of inaction as far as the soil was concerned, the consequences would, no doubt, be most disastrous; but as yet there was no cause for alarm. On the whole, he would say, that he was far from taking as gloomy a view of the state of Ireland as some noble Lords were inclined to adopt. He knew the perils and difficulties by which that country was unhappily surrounded; but he was sanguine in the expectation that the Legislature would be able to weather the storm, and that it would hereafter be seen that they had given to the Irish cultivator of land an improved system, the fruit of which would be of great and permanent advantage.

The Earl of RODEN: The proceedings in their Lordships' House would infallibly create the greatest interest in Ireland. Since the opening of the Session, that night had been looked forward to with the deepest anxiety, and as one who felt the most sincere solicitude in everything that affected the welfare of that country, he felt himself in candour called upon to acknowledge how great was the gratification he had experienced in witnessing the anxiety, the industry, and the good intention with which the Government had taken in hand so important and difficult a subject as that which now engaged their attention. All he lamented was, that any combination of circumstances should have prevented the immediate application of relief. He did not concur with the noble Earl who had just resumed his seat in the modified views he took of the disadvantages resulting from the Labour-rate Act. He looked upon that measure as a most unfortunate error. Not only had it been inoperative of all good, but it had been positively detrimental and decidedly mischievous, by withdrawing the labour of the peasant population from its legitimate function, the tilling of the land, to works which did not in any important degree promote the convenience of the public. It was not to be supposed that peasants who could earn 2*s.* a day on the roadside, would undertake in preference agricultural labour at a much lower rate of remuneration; moreover, it was well known to every one conversant with the state of things in Ireland, that labourers would very much prefer working at the public works, even at lower wages, than to undertake agricultural labour in the service of private farmers, who took care that they should work vigorously. As for the promised Ministerial measures, he would only say of them, that, as far as he could judge of them from the speech of the noble Marquess opposite, they were boons to Ireland for which he was sure Ireland would be grateful.

Earl FITZWILLIAM observed with regret the absence of the noble and learned Lord (Lord Brougham) who had edified their Lordships with so eloquent and diversified an address. Had the noble Lord not left the House, he (Earl Fitzwilliam) would have ventured to offer one or two observations in reference to various passages in his address; but it was very much to be lamented that it had become a habit with his noble Friend, after making a long speech *de omnibus rebus et quibusdam aliis*, suddenly to vanish no one knew where. He went off something like gun-cotton, and disappeared as completely. There were many things in the noble Lord's address of which he (Earl Fitzwilliam) approved most cordially; and he felt particularly grateful for the suggestion which he threw out at the close, namely, that they should do everything in their power to restrain the consumption of farinaceous food. The recommendation was an excellent one, and was eminently deserving of their Lordships' most serious consideration. There was another admirable passage in the noble and learned Lord's address, for which he, as an Irishman, thanked him warmly—that in which he enforced on their Lordships' minds this unquestionable fact, that the evil under which Ireland was suffering was an imperial question. He trusted that this fact would sink deeply into the minds of the English people, and more especially of the inhabitants of Liverpool and Lancashire generally. He was particularly anxious that it should be properly understood and appreciated in Liverpool, where the pressure on the rates for the relief of the Irish poor was so severely felt; for he knew how much and how naturally public opinion was influenced in this country by the opinions held and the conduct pursued in that great town—the second capital, so to speak, of England. With respect to the Labour-rate Act, he admitted that it had not, in all respects, worked as well as its promoters could have wished; but he still thought that too severe charges had been brought against this measure. He would ask those who censured it unqualifiedly, what would the position of the country have been had it not been for that Act? It was intended as a test to the landowners of Ireland, to whom the alternative of providing private employment for the people, or of submitting to taxation for public works, was offered; and in this sense it had failed; but it was undeniable, notwithstanding, that it had been productive of great benefit to the popular classes. The works which were undertaken under its provisions were not as great, nor as beneficial, nor as national, as he could have wished; but, notwithstanding all this, he was decidedly of opinion that very great benefit had been derived, in the mitigation of popular distress, from the operation of the law. With respect to the Ministerial measures opened to their consideration that evening, he would only say, that, on the whole, they did as much credit to the wisdom of the Government, as to their kindness of heart. He spoke thus, in general terms of approval, because, although there might be some features in the scheme to which he might, perhaps, be inclined to take exception, still, he thought, upon the whole, that they had, to a certain extent at least, fairly grappled with the evils under which Ireland laboured. But on behalf of that calumniated body of men, the Irish landlords, he must put in a plea. He must, on their behalf, take the liberty of saying, that if it was intended that the regeneration of Ireland, and the bringing of that country and its rural population into a healthy state, should be cast upon one class of the Queen's subjects, and that one class the landholders of Ireland, the people and Legislature of this great empire would be guilty of a gross injustice to that class. Supposing that this great task were to be imposed upon Ireland alone, were there no other classes in that country besides the landowners so wealthy and so prominent in position as to be called upon to undertake this great and expensive work? Assuredly there were many. But he would go further, and contend that the task ought not to be cast on Ireland alone. Why was Ireland in her present condition? Why was her rural population what it was? He asked wealthy London—he asked wealthy England, why Ireland was poor? What had been the cause of the poverty and misery of Ireland? He would answer, England had been the cause of all those evils. Yes, it was the original tyranny of England, and her subsequent misrule for centuries, that had reduced Ireland to degradation and destitution; and if this were so—and that it was so history attested—why should it be said that Ireland was to be rescued from her present distressing position by Irish means alone? The people and Legislature of England must assist. When they heard that 22,000 Irish paupers had become chargeable on the poor rates of Liverpool alone, they could not continue to think that the task of regeneration was incumbent on Ireland alone. The wise course would be for Government to grant loans to the landowners, and otherwise to assist them in the performance of the great work. Although he approved, as a whole, of the great scheme which the Ministers had propounded, he confessed he hoped that even more than they as yet contemplated would have to be done in order to satisfy the requirements of the present dreadful emergency. There was one part of the plan to which, perhaps, some exception might be taken. He alluded to the course proposed to be adopted in reference to the reclamation of waste lands. This was the only part of the scheme in which the Government appeared; and yet, he was very much inclined to think, that this public operation was the very one of all others from which Government ought most cautiously to abstain. At all events, the question was one which should be handled with extreme delicacy and ability; for the idea of placing the Government of England in the position of a body farming Ireland, was a thing very much to be deprecated. There was one particular reform which he was very anxious to see introduced into Ireland. The entire system of railways ought to be in the hands of the Government. Certain he was, that in Ireland, if they were to look to the construction of railways, those works should be undertaken by the Government. Very little indeed had as yet been done in that way; and, therefore, nothing that had heretofore occurred in Ireland could be pleaded as barring the Government from the adoption of a course so wise and judicious. In conclusion, he would merely remark, that the only means for producing the regeneration of Ireland, and founding her prosperity on a permanent basis, was to bring about a great moral revolution in the character of the rural population of Ireland; and to the accomplishment of this great object the Government should devote their best and most earnest energies.

The EARL of MOUNTCASHELL said, that the noble Earl opposite had asked what were the causes of those evils which afflicted Ireland? He would refer any one who put that question to the whole history of Ireland: from the days of Henry II. down to the present period, the rule of England had always been baneful to Ireland. England had always had its petty jealousies, and had always treated Ireland as a half-conquered country, and had always made her the victim of her manufacturing jealousy. She had invariably exercised her power to prevent the extension of Irish trade, her commerce, and her agriculture. The noble Earl then instanced Poynings' Law, and other Acts, for the purpose of showing that England had unfairly and improperly limited the power of the Irish Parliament. Since the Union, many Acts of a similar tendency and conceived in the same spirit had been passed; and the alterations which had been made in the glass and excise duties had stopped some flourishing manufactures in Ireland. There was, however, one question which at that moment was of paramount importance: it was this—could the Irish landlords support the poor? He would submit to the House a short statement, which would show their Lordships the nature and extent of the resources which the landlords possessed, and then the House might judge for itself of their ability to meet the present emergency. Mr. Griffiths, by desire of the Government, valued the whole of Ireland; that gentleman estimated the entire rental of the country at 12,715,000*l*. per annum. But, for facility of calculation, let it be taken at 13,000,000*l*. The land which yielded this rental of 13,000,000*l*. was to be saddled with these heavy expenses. Now, the amount of judgments, mortgages, and other bond debts which incumbered the landed estates in Ireland, might be calculated to amount at least to eight years' rental—that is, eight times 13,000,000*l*., which would be 104,000,000*l*. He would put down the interest upon 100,000,000*l*. at 5 per cent. Some of the land, however, paid 6 per cent, but some only paid 4½ per cent, so that he would put it down at 5 per cent on an average. Then for agency and collection he would put down 1*s*. in the pound, which made 650,000*l*.; law expenses, say about 1*s*. in the pound, which would make 650,000*l*.; jointures, one-twentieth of the income; marriage settlements, &c., amounted to about 4,000,000*l*.; interest, 2,000,000*l*. per annum; proportion of tithe rent-charge, 1,500,000*l*.; making a total amount of 10,450,000*l*., which, if deducted from the whole rental of 13,000,000*l*., would leave only a balance of about 2,500,000*l*. for the landlords. It was then very easy to see how much the landlords of Ireland had at their disposal after paying all these charges. He had no objection to have his calculations sifted to the bottom, but he pledged himself that they were rather under than over the mark. Was it possible, he asked, with the money actually at the disposal of the landlords of Ireland, to support the present population upon their estates? According to the poor-law reports, there were 3,000,000 of persons every year—even in the common years—who could not procure employment. The average support of each person in a poor-house amounted to about 1*s*. 6*d*. per week. This would require a sum of about 12,000,000*l*. a year for the support of 3,000,000 of persons. To expect, then, that the Irish landlords could possibly meet this large demand with their limited resources, was entirely out of the question. He suggested, as a temporary measure of relief to the landlords, who had been brought into their present difficulties by no fault of their own, but merely by the pressure of the times, which had prevented their tenantry from paying their rents, that a Bill should be passed preventing the foreclosure of mortgages for three years, upon payment of 3½ per cent out of the rental. The landlords of Ireland were accused by persons in this country of exacting too much rent from their tenants.

It was right that it should go abroad that this was altogether false. The mistake arose from confounding the Irish plantation acre with the English statute acre, which were quite different, the former being 1½ acre and 19 perches of English measure. In the division of the profits of land it was generally understood that one-fourth should go to the landlord, and three-fourths for the support and repayment of the labour of the tenant; and he would assert that if this calculation were brought to the test as regarded Ireland, there would not be a single instance in which the landlord obtained one-fourth of the profits. He believed the frequency of early marriages had been one cause of the minute subdivision of land, and these early marriages were encouraged by the Roman Catholic priests, who derived the greater portion of their incomes from the fees arising from them. If to that was added the over population and want of capital, they would arrive at what were the leading evils of Ireland. To show how much property was subdivided in Ireland, he would state that the entire number of farms was 619,000, and of these there were no less than 310,000, which did not exceed five acres ; there were 152,000 above five and not exceeding fifteen acres, 79,000 above fifteen and not exceeding thirty acres, and only 47,000 which exceeded sixty acres in all Ireland. One great cause of the absence of all preparation for the ensuing harvest was, that the labourers were themselves without potatoes, and the farmers, who were in the habit of employing them, were also without potatoes. When they offered to work for the farmers, the farmers were unable to provide them with food, and the consequence was they were obliged to go upon the public works. He entreated the earnest attention of their Lordships to the disastrous state in which that country would be placed next year if no arrangements were made for providing seed for the farmers and labourers. A supply ought to be at once sent over to Ireland for distribution in the various localities: if that were not done, and without payment where the means of purchasing it was not to be procured, a great portion of the land must remain uncultivated. The people were at present dying by hundreds, and if some measures were not taken the country would be depopulated altogether next year, if not by famine, by the cholera, which was already making its appearance.

The MARQUESS of WESTMEATH would take that opportunity of expressing his admiration of the tone and manner of the noble Marquess who had opened the debate, towards Ireland. He wished to recall to their observation that under the measures proposed by the Government, the Irish landed proprietor would be enabled to borrow money for the purpose of employing the people. He hoped that would be distinctly understood, and that it was not, as had been stated by the noble and learned Lord who had left the House, for their own individual advantage. He understood that they were merely the responsible medium for borrowing the money. He feared, however, that in many cases these measures would be inoperative. Where a proprietor possessed extensive estates which were burdened with a large population, it would be impossible to make any arrangements which would enable him to meet the destitution that existed; and he feared their Lordships knew little of the relative position of the landed proprietors and the tenantry in Ireland. As a landed proprietor, he felt that the law was on a radically wrong and improper footing as regarded the occupation of land in Ireland. In England if a tenant committed waste, there would be no difficulty in obtaining an injunction to restrain him ; in Ireland that was almost impossible, and it amounted to nothing less than a denial of justice. In 1844, he (the Marquess of Westmeath) had stated before Lord Devon's Committee, on his oath, that if there was not a new arrangement relative to the occupation of land, in less than five years the whole population of Ireland would be obliged to fall back upon the State for food. A noble and learned Lord had expressed a wish that no Peer of Parliament or Member of the House of Commons who voted on these measures, should avail himself of any share of the money. He was perfectly willing to meet the noble and learned Lord in his objections. All that he asked was that his property might be placed in his own power. He denied that the law did it—give him that, and they should never hear him or any proprietor in Ireland refuse to assist the people in their distress. He had had some correspondence with some of the highest legal authorities in Ireland, and they all agreed with him that the power of granting a writ of injunction should be vested in the assistant barrister, and the expense of it reduced to next to nothing;

but he had been unable to attain this object. The noble Marquess had referred to the subject of emigration: he regretted that there was no other fair outlet for the population of Ireland; but they had no right to charge that upon Ireland, unless they passed such laws as were fit for the condition of that country. The Irish proprietors were not the authors of their misfortunes. He was quite willing to consent to any amount of taxation to relieve the distress which pressed upon Ireland; but let them know what they were about, and not let them go on with this system of borrowing money without knowing the consequences.

EARL GREY would not occupy more than a few moments of their Lordships' time; but there were a few remarks which had been made in the course of the debate, which ought not to be allowed to pass without some notice from that side of the House. He agreed with what had been said by many noble Lords relative to the Act of last Session, commonly, but incorrectly, called the Labour-rate Act. The great majority of the noble Lords who had spoken had pronounced the strongest sentence of condemnation upon that Act; and certainly, it must be presumed from what fell from those noble Lords, that the impression which must have been made, implied a grave censure on the Government, for want of common prudence and foresight in the matter. After what had passed in the course of last Session, he saw scarcely any ground for that censure. The noble and learned Lord had said that the Labour-rate Act of last Session had been passed in a great hurry; but he would remind him that it was but a renewal of one passed in an early period of the Session, after full consideration and discussion, and when other measures had been brought forward for the relief of the distress existing in Ireland. Among those the most effective under which relief was afforded to meet the distress arising from the partial failure of the potato crop of 1845, was the measure authorizing presentments for public works: the existing Act was but a renewal, with some particular exceptions, of that measure. That Act gave power to the baronial sessions to make presentments for public works, the whole amount for which was to be advanced by the Government, one half of the expenses being repaid by instalments by the presenters, the other half being borne by the Treasury. That measure was brought in in January last; it passed both Houses of Parliament, and was brought into extensive operation. The relief committees in Ireland made very good use of this measure for the purpose of meeting the existing distress. Presentments to the large amount of 1,300,000*l.* were made, and so far from complaints being made at the time of presentments of useless works, in some districts where no distress existed presentments were made, in order, as they candidly avowed, that the district might have, what they called, its fair share of relief. That was a great abuse. These were not the measures for which the money was granted by Parliament, but it was so applied. Abuses of the grossest kind were practised; persons who had no claims whatever on account of destitution were employed, and works were carried on which were altogether unnecessary. This was a painful subject, and he would not further dwell upon it. But this he would say, that the measure proved perfectly effectual. Of the 1,300,000*l.* granted, only 300,000*l.* had been issued up to the time those works closed; yet that amount, small as it was, had been most effective in relieving Irish distress up to the time that the Bill, which afterwards passed, was introduced into Parliament. The Government was in possession of evidence to show that under this Bill the Irish people in the early part of the summer of last year were not only well off, but better off than they usually were. He had evidence in his hand, that up to quite the end of the summer there was every sign of more than usual prosperity; the revenue was increasing, and the deposits in the saving banks were greater than had been known for some time previous. He knew also, on the evidence of the Catholic clergy, that there was less fever in the county of Clare, one of the most wretched parts of Ireland, than in ordinary years. In spite of abuses, therefore, the measure had succeeded in relieving the distress which existed. Under these circumstances the Government, at the end of June, succeeded to office. Early in August it was first known that the potato crop, which up to that time had been most promising, and even luxuriant, was suddenly blighted, and in a great measure destroyed. Under these circumstances he asked their Lordships, was it unnatural or unreasonable that the Government, finding a Bill had been passed, which, though liable to some objections, had yet greatly succeeded in the main object of relieving the distress which prevailed, should consider it would be the best course they could adopt to renew the measure, with such modifications as appeared necessary? Then, what modifications did they make? Under the former Act one-half the money only was to be repaid; and the Government, thinking that that arrangement was the chief cause of the evils and abuses that had prevailed, determined to charge the whole amount levied, and to exclude private works. Accordingly, the Bill was so amended, and in that state it passed. Now, he said the Government had a right to expect assistance and co-operation; and he would ask, if the measure had failed, was its failure fairly attributable to error in the provisions of the Bill, or to the manner in which the powers granted by the Bill had been exercised? The noble Lord mentioned, among the abuses that prevailed, that works were presented which were not only useless but mischievous. Now, why was this? Was it that no works of a more beneficial nature could be found? He lived in not the most unimproved county in England, yet many useful works could be found in that county; and he did not believe that in any part of England they could find a district so much improved that no really useful works could be projected. He believed, therefore, that if proper care had been taken, really useful works might have been found. But the error arose from this—that they ordered a great many more works to be done than ought to have been done. It was their business to give their works to the really destitute, and to none other. It was their business, and not that of the Government, to see that the relief was confined to the really destitute; yet, as the noble Lord himself stated, they employed persons on these works who were not in the least need of assistance. The noble Lord said the fishermen had drawn up their boats, finding it more profitable to go upon the public works, thus not only depriving the people of one species of food, but at the same time increasing the public burdens. Let him ask who put them on those works? Who issued the work tickets to these fishermen? It was the gentlemen of the locality. It was painful to say these things, but it was necessary for the House and the country that the truth should be known. Another reason why the works were not so useful as they ought to have been was, that they were brought into operation prematurely. The Government had a right to expect, that so long as the harvest lasted, there would be no pressure. Instead of this, in the month of August or the beginning of September, there was so great a pressure on the Government to continue or commence works, that it was found impossible to resist it. He would mention one or two instances. A deputation came from Westport to the Castle, declaring that the necessity for undertaking works in that district was so urgent that they could not possibly be postponed; yet afterwards the Government received authentic information, that at that very time the crops of corn in that neighbourhood were actually suffering for want of hands to cut them. Again, a large number of labourers were withdrawn from the works of the Shannon Navigation, and put upon the relief works. Whose fault was that? Was it not the fault of those whose business it was to take care that the claims for relief were properly tested? When he said this, however, he could not conceal from himself that while he was throwing considerable blame upon the gentry of Ireland, at the same time he was bound to make great allowances for the position in which they were placed. He admitted their difficulties, and he assured them that he most deeply sympathized with them. He knew that in England we had the advantage of the co-operation of an intelligent middle class, who assisted their superiors in sifting the claims that came before them; and he was aware that, to a great extent, the Irish gentry were without this assistance. It was the great and grievous misfortune of that unhappy country that this middle class did not exist; but this misfortune could not be attributed to the Government; and had any other plan been substituted for the relief of the Irish people, precisely the same want of adequate machinery for carrying it into operation would have produced similar disappointment. But when those most interested thus abdicated their functions, no Government could be prepared to undertake them. He held in his hand the Report of the Board of Works, which put this in a strong light. This report, after stating the principle and theory of the Relief Act, stated that, in practice, the sessions presented without previous local inquiry; they exercised little or no discrimination, so that the board had to perform its duties and those of the sessions in addition; it had to ascertain the amount of destitution in different localities, and incur the odium of rejecting many presentations; it had also to select the names from the list returned as destitute. The Board of Works and its officers had thus duties thrown upon them it was physically impossible they could perform, and which Parliament never meant them to undertake. It was his firm conviction, that if in the working of this Bill the Government had received proper co-operation, it would have been successful. He was compelled to say this much in defence of the Government. He was sorry to say that, if necessary, he could have carried the statement much further; but he thought he had said enough to enable their Lordships to account for the non-success of the measure. But he had also to observe, that it was expected other measures would have been passed, and that more efforts would have been made to increase the amount of private and profitable employment. He confessed his rooted conviction was that really advantageous employment of industry could only take place under private superintendence. They knew that the Million Act, which had not succeeded in Ireland, had succeeded in Scotland. The proprietors in Scotland, under the same circumstances, had applied for and obtained a large sum of money, and applied it to the permanent improvement of their estates, at the same time that they had supplied the population with profitable labour. He would speak of only two more points. It was said the Government ought to have established depôts of corn, and furnished supplies of food to the people. There were returns on this subject preparing, and when they were furnished their Lordships would see the Government had done quite as much as it was prudent to do. The Government were reproached with not having provided a larger amount of supplies; but it must be remembered that the Government could only obtain these supplies by purchase, which must infallibly have had the effect of enhancing prices. Government could not purchase in Ireland or abroad. As it was, the amount of grain of all kinds, including Indian corn and flour, entered for consumption, exceeded 4,800,000 quarters; and the quantity imported, though less, exceeded 4,000,000 quarters. Consider what gigantic transactions this implied; that our merchants had in every quarter of the world agents buying wherever they could to advantage every quarter of corn—in the Mediterranean, on the Danube, in Southern Russia, on the Baltic, in America, and, in fact, in every part of the world. If the Government had attempted to buy in these markets, it would have been necessary to substitute for this voluntary, unpaid, and effective agency, an agency on the part of Government most expensive and ineffective. It would have been a policy absolutely suicidal to have attempted to interfere with the course of trade. The noble Lord opposite (Lord Stanley) thought that Government ought to have come forward and established depôts in places where small dealers were making large profits by dealing in grain. This appeared to him the very worst advice which he had ever had the misfortune to hear given to their Lordships. If there was one thing more essential than another with a view of improving the condition of Ireland, it was the creation of a class of small dealers; and he could conceive no greater injury to that country than to check the growth of this infant trade. The only other point to which he would advert was emigration—a subject more immediately connected with his own department in the Government. Having most anxiously considered the subject, he had come to the conclusion, and the Government had thought fit to adopt his views, that to undertake on the part of the Executive Government to find the means of carrying across the Atlantic those who might wish to emigrate, would be to undertake a task in which it would be utterly impossible to expect success; instead of doing good they would do mischief. He found that the emigration to North America from these kingdoms in the last ten years had been no less than 687,000. During the past year 110,000 went to the United States and the British North American colonies, the vast proportion of whom were Irish, amounting to no less than from five-sixths to six-sevenths of the whole number. The far greater number of these belonged to the labouring class, for out of 32,750 who arrived in Canada, there were only 600 cabin passengers. The former went out at a very low cost, and no doubt endured very great hardships; but under the new provisions it was very seldom that abuses occurred, such as to endanger life or health; and if such cases ever occurred now, it was from infractions of the law, which in almost every case were visited with certain punishment. The journey was mostly performed in the summer. They emigrated by means of assistance which they received from their friends to a very large amount, From information which he had received, and on the accuracy of which he could rely, it seemed that those who went out to the

United States or British North America were in the habit of remitting to their friends whom they had left behind the money necessary to enable them to emigrate also. It was estimated that from Liverpool alone, in the course of the last season, no less a sum than 37,000*l.* was sent in remittances of this kind. From the example afforded by the relief system in Ireland they might very fairly assume that, if the Government were to undertake to provide the passage of emigrants who had no means of finding their own way out, a very small proportion indeed would find the means. These sacrifices would be no longer made; these remittances, now so valuable a resource in aid of emigration, would cease. But more than that; if Government furnished the means, expectations of a very different kind, as regarded accommodation, would be entertained, from those with which emigrants would set forth relying on their own means. If Government were to carry them out, the expense could not be less than 5*l.* a head, whereas the cost to the emigrants themselves was certainly one-third less. The only object which could influence the Government in taking such a step must be to increase emigration; but without any such interference it would be found that the tide of emigration would set much faster than before, and he should not be surprised if the number next year doubled that in the present. These were some of the reasons which induced him to concur with the noble Lord who had preceded him in his present office in thinking that it would be impossible for Her Majesty's Government to undertake the conveyance of emigrants across the Atlantic. They would, however, be able to do much for the emigrant when once landed on the other side. True, they could not find him employment, but they undertook to give him full information as to where employment was to be found, and to put him in the way of getting in the cheapest manner to the market for his labour. Under this system, at a small expense, they would be able to show that emigration had proceeded most satisfactorily. Last year 32,750 emigrants landed in Canada from this country; and the reports of the emigration agent, together with the despatch of Lord Cathcart, stated that out of that number 28,000 and upwards had actually settled in the colony, and were, up to September, all in employment, and all well to do in their circumstances. Such having been the results of the present system, Her Majesty's Government had not thought it advisable to adopt any of those projects which had been recommended with the view of adding to the facilities of emigration from this country to the colonies.

LORD MONTEAGLE said, that he would not then have trespassed upon their Lordships' time, but from some statements which had been made by the noble Earl (Earl Grey) which, in his opinion, called for some observation, not only at his (Lord Monteagle's) hands, but also at the hands of all those who, in common with him, felt an interest in the welfare of Ireland. The noble Earl had seemed to imagine that there had been an imputation cast upon the Government by the remarks offered in reference to the Labour-rate Act, and in this belief the noble Earl had indignantly repelled the supposed imputation. But he (Lord Monteagle) could not see that, in this debate, there had been any of that vituperative or violent language, or severity of censure, which could have called from the noble Earl such a defence. It was not to be supposed, because noble Lords or persons out of doors attacked the Labour-rate Act, that therefore they attacked the Government. That was a measure with which they had had to deal as it had been presented to them; and it was just, legitimate, and defensible, that they should express their opinions of its evil working without any Minister of the Crown being required to tell them that thereby they were involving the question of an attack on the Government. The defence of the Act was, that when passed in August last, very few of their Lordships being present, it was only the renewal of a former Act; and that Act had been found to work well, with some exceptions. Now the circumstances of Ireland, in respect to the working of the former Act and of the present Act, were totally different. When the first Bill was introduced, they had not had the experience of the state of Ireland in reference to such a system to enable them to deal with such a question, as, before the close of last Session, both Government, and Legislature, and people, had acquired. His noble Friend said that there were abuses in that Act, and that its evil working was exhibited just as was that of the present Act. The evil effect in the first case had been, that the inducements which had been held out to attach themselves to the public works, had induced labourers to desert their natural, ordinary, and necessary occupations; and this was precisely the complaint which the working of the second Act had elicited. That inconvenience had been shown in the working of the previous Act; and the observation of that inconvenience should have dissuaded his noble Friend from following the example of which he was the first to show the evil consequences. The state of Ireland under the working of the first Act, was nothing in comparison to the distressed condition in which it was at present. If that Act, which was found pregnant with evil, was the Act which the Government was called upon to renew, it behoved the Government and Parliament to pause before they adopted it. His noble Friend said that the present Act was effectual for the purpose for which it was designed, by keeping the people alive in Ireland, and saving them from starvation. But as to the two measures, there was no analogy with respect to their remedial tendencies. The Act in operation had given to the Government the greatest power that had ever been vested in the Government for the last hundred years, for it had given them unlimited command of the power of the purse; it was the only Act by which the power of using the public purse was given over without stint or measure to the control of the Government. And was it in reality effectual for the purpose for which it was enacted? Let them look at Skibbereen, and other parts of Ireland, and see what was taking place there at that moment. It was not effectual for any good purpose, except in districts in which the making of roads was an advisable and profitable work. His noble Friend seemed to understand neither the Act, nor the working of the Act. One would imagine, from the arguments of his noble Friend, that it was left open to the sessions in Ireland to select works of a useful character, as freely as such works might be selected in the county of Northumberland, should they ever be needed there. But the fact was, that the Irish landlords were bound up within the four corners of that Act, and limited by it to such works as might be presented by the grand juries. For instance, building was not within the Act, and therefore they were necessarily driven to making roads, according to the express opinion of the law officers of the Crown in Ireland, who, he believed, were consulted on the point. Perhaps the noble Earl did not know that of all parts of the Queen's dominions, Ireland was that part in which were to be seen the best devised roads, the best engineered, and supplied with the most durable materials; and yet, under this Act, the only species of labour which could be called into operation was labour applied for making roads, or that species of labour which was least wanted. He condemned the Labour-rate Act from the bottom of his heart; but the noble Earl defended it with an intense devotion. If, however, the Act was so good a one, why was Mr. Labouchere's letter written, which was an absolute repeal of the statute, and the substitution of another and different scheme in its stead? Why were they now called upon to set it aside, if it deserved the encomiums of his noble Friend? His noble Friend (Earl Grey), however, felt that it was impossible to deny the failure of the Act; and then he said that the failure of the Act was not attributable to the law—to the Board of Works, or to the working man—but altogether to the non-co-operation of the Irish proprietors. He was sorry that such an imputation should have been sanctioned by the high authority of his noble Friend. He was prepared to prove that whatever the state of society had been into which they had introduced such a measure, or enactments like it, which stood as a disgrace upon the Statute-book, whether in Ireland or in this part of the empire, improved as it was beyond the condition of Ireland, they could not safely have introduced the machinery of this Act, under circumstances like those under which it had been introduced in Ireland. Let not the noble Earl try the public spirit, the morality, the virtue, or the resoluteness of the county of Northumberland, by such an Act—should the state of that county ever require the application of any remedial measures of the kind. The noble Earl said that improper presentments had been made, and that a lavish expenditure of public money had taken place. He was quite ready to admit that the expenditure was extravagant, and, further, that at the same time that these extravagant rates of wages were given, being double and treble the ordinary rates, people were dying in great numbers, in the same districts, of absolute want. But the fact was, there could be no adequate machinery for the execution of such an Act. Still there were abundance of checks; there must be, after the presentments, the approval of the Lord Lieutenant, the approval of the Board of Works, the approval of the Treasury, and therefore, if extravagant presentments had been made, the blame ought equally to be shared by those authorities. As to the selection, it was the duty of the Government officers who were sent down into the different districts of Ireland to make the selection. The Act expressly stated, that the selection of works was not the duty of the landlord. How was it possible for magistrates at the presentment sessions to judge of the works sent in to them, unless they were aided by professional officers sent down by Government? The noble Lord, after describing the mode in which presentments were made in Ireland, and the small amount of deliberation permitted to the magistrates, craved the indulgence of the House while he said a word or two on a matter personal to himself. He did not desire to impute malignity to the great medium of public opinion in which a misrepresentation of his conduct had appeared; but he did attribute malignity to the quarter, wherever it was, from which the information was derived. He was chairman of a special sessions in the south of Ireland, where presentments were made out of a nature infinitely beyond their power to master. They applied to the officer of the Board of Works, who requested them to consider the applications, and report upon them to the board, from which, he stated, they would receive the best consideration. Accordingly, at the instance of this officer, the sessions were adjourned for ten days, to give him an opportunity of considering the nature of the works. When the adjourned meeting took place, he (Lord Monteagle) was in the chair, and proposed to go through the works in succession, first obtaining the report of the public officer. When the officer was applied to, however, he said he had been unable to examine them, using these remarkable words: "If my body had been made of cast metal, and my brains of quicksilver, it would have been impossible for me to have discharged this duty." He at the same time entreated them to send all the works up to the Board of Works, stating that there they would be examined, and a selection made. Much to his (Lord Monteagle's) regret that proposition was agreed to; yet he had been charged with having sent up an immense mass of presentments, though that course was followed at the request of the officer of the Board of Works, and, indeed, at his direct recommendation. He would not have referred to this had not his conduct been made the subject of great misrepresentation; for, in point of fact, the proposal he made was overruled by an amendment, and the course which was followed was that suggested by an officer of the Crown. The noble Earl had expressed his astonishment that the landlords of Ireland had not availed themselves of the other measures last Session, and he referred to the Drainage Act. It was rather too hard to allege this omission as a direct charge, when the Drainage Act was well known to be in its nature so defective and inapplicable that it was intended to be amended in the present Session. The last topic to which he should refer was most important, and he rejoiced that Her Majesty's Government had undertaken it. He meant the question of emigration. He did not look upon the emigration of millions as applicable to the circumstances of the country either in point of humanity or of expense; but in particular districts of Ireland, where the population had got into a state of congestion, it was difficult to deal with it in other way than by applying the topical remedy of emigration. He had always felt that the application of this remedy was beneficial to landlords as well as tenants. It was not universal, but local, emigration that was contemplated. The great difficulty upon this subject was to avoid the substituting public money for that which would go on without it; for if the public aid were substituted, the public money would be wasted. What Her Majesty's Government should seek to attain was that sort of emigration which would have a tendency to cause the poorer sort of emigrants to migrate; and in order to accomplish which great care should be taken, and great discrimination used, in the class of persons to whom assistance was to be given when they reached their destination. The assistance to be given on their reaching the other side should not be given to the emigrant who carried capital with him, but only to that class which might be stated as, though not the pauper, yet the poorer class of emigrants. He had not intended to say one word in the course of the debate that night, and would have been willing to allow the Labour-rate Act to have withstood the objections that assailed it on every side; but he could not prevent making some observations when the failure of that Act had been attributed to the landlords of Ireland.

The MARQUESS of CLANRICARDE admitted, that the Labour-rate Act gave rise to much dissatisfaction; and that, in a considerable degree, it had failed in its effect. He thought, however, that the noble Lord who had just resumed his seat had mistaken the purport of the observations of his noble Friend the Secretary for the Colonies. Considering the manner in which the Bill had been attacked, his noble Friend had said, that it was right that the House should consider the circumstances under which the measure had been brought forward. Had the proprietors of Ireland acted differently, the result of the Act might have been different. It was never intended that the Bill should have been one for feeding the Irish people; and, although it had been so fiercely attacked to-night by a noble Peer, whom, as he had left the House, he might name, the Earl of Roden, he could not but remember, that a week after the Bill had been introduced, that noble Earl had come down to their Lordships' House, and expressed his hope that the measure would be effective in relieving the evils it was intended to alleviate. The fact was, that, upon their accession to office, Her Majesty's Government had found the Bill in question, and the alterations which they had made in it were merely designed to remedy what they considered to be the faults of their predecessors. He admitted that the Million Act had failed, but principally owing to a legal defect, which prevented it from being applicable to tenants at will. It was to remedy that defect that Mr. Labouchere's letter was issued. Let him, however, remind their Lordships of the great difficulties by which they were surrounded. Those who found fault with the Government measures had not suggested others. No man thought at the close of last Session that the famine which was hovering over Ireland would have overtaken it in so brief a time. He anticipated that the measures proposed would speedily work great good; more especially that respecting emigration.

Question agreed to.

House adjourned.

HOUSE OF COMMONS,

Monday, January 25, 1847.

MINUTES.] PUBLIC BILLS.—1° Buck Wheat, etc. Importation; Brewing from Sugar; Labouring Poor; Poor Relief (Ireland).

PETITIONS PRESENTED. From Thetford Union, for Alteration of the Law of Settlement—From St. Pancras, for Better Observance of the Lord's Day.—From York Union, for Repeal of the Poor Removal Act.—From Assessors and Collectors of Taxes of Worcester, complaining of the Inadequacy of their Remuneration.—From Bridgewater, for the Adoption of Measures for the Relief of the Destitute Irish, and for the Enactment of a Just and Efficient Poor Law for Ireland and Scotland. —From Habergham-Eaves, for Limiting the Hours of Labour in Factories.—From Bury St. Edmunds, and Glasgow, for Allowing the Use of Sugar and Molasses in Breweries and Distilleries.—From Sunderland, for carrying into effect the Report of the Select Committee with respect to Lighthouses.—From Enfield, and several other places, for Employing Ships at the disposal of Government in Importing Grain and Provisions into Ireland.

HONG-KONG.

DR. BOWRING put the following question to the Under Secretary for the Colonies :—" Whether any answer has been received to the communications made from the Colonial Office as to the infliction of corporal punishment by the police courts at Hong-Kong? Whether any steps have been taken to prevent the infliction of corporal punishment, whether by flogging, bastinadoing, or cutting off the tails of the Chinese, when they have been unable to pay pecuniary fines? Whether an ordinance circulated in the Chinese newspapers (No. 10, of 1844), has been brought to the notice of Her Majesty's Government, and obtained their sanction; such ordinance appearing to authorize whatever barbarous and brutal punishments may be inflicted under the Chinese code, or according to Chinese usages? 'And be it enacted, that in lieu of the whole or any part of any penalty provided by the law, statute, or ordinance whatsoever, it shall be lawful for the court of justice before whom the matter shall be adjudicated upon, to sentence any offender, being a native of China, or a native of Hong-Kong, of Chinese origin, to undergo such punishment in conformity with the usages of China as has hitherto been usually inflicted on natives of China committing offences in this colony.''

MR. HAWES said, that the hon. Member last Session drew attention to the case of a Chinese who had been subjected to corporal punishment: and he (Mr. Hawes) told him that all the circumstances connected with that case should be inquired into. The noble Lord at the head of the Colonial Department had in consequence written to the Governor of Hong-Kong, and the following explanation had been received :—The Chinese in question had been guilty of felony, and was arrested. A rescue, attended with considerable violence, was attempted by a large number of persons. However, the offender and the parties attempting the rescue, were finally captured, and on conviction were subjected to a fine of five dollars, or to corporal punishment to the extent of twenty strokes with a rattan, and also, he must confess, to the loss of their tails. But it should be borne in mind that those seas were infested with gangs of violent and lawless men, and that it was difficult to find any punishment applicable to them which would be of beneficial effect, imprisonment for any long period being out of the question. Consequently the magistrate had the power of inflicting on the Chinese the punishment of the loss of their tails. His hon. Friend had called the attention of the House to an ordinance sanctioned by the Crown in 1844, not lightly, but after a great deal of consideration. He was bound to admit it to be quite impossible to permit the criminal law of China to be incorporated with the British law, the former comprehending some of the most ingenious barbarities that could be devised. He would therefore promise that on that particular point further inquiry should be made, and the whole subject of the criminal law of Hong-Kong brought under the immediate attention of the noble Lord at the head of the Colonial Department.

ALLEGED CRUELTIES TO SIKH PRISONERS.

DR. BOWRING, referring to what passed on this subject on the first day of the Session, observed, that the statement originated in a local newspaper of considerable circulation, the *Stamford Mercury*, and, coming to the knowledge of the members of the Peace Society, was still more widely circulated through their agency. He had been applied to by that body to explain under what circumstances they had given circulation to it. The fact was, such a letter had been written in India and despatched to England, as could be proved by the postmarks, though he believed that anything so horrible as that letter represented could not take place in modern times, or in the English army.

MR. F. MAULE entirely exonerated the members of the Peace Society from being wilful circulators of the report in question with a knowledge of its falsehood. The letter purported to be written by a soldier of the 80th regiment, and he (Mr. Maule) had seen a transcript of the letter certified as a copy by the Lord Mayor. The statement had been referred to Lord Gough, who instituted a court of inquiry on the subject; and he (Mr. Maule) had a report of that court of inquiry, containing this man's evidence. The man said that he did not write such a statement to his father. The case appeared to be, that to his father he made one statement, and to the court of inquiry he made a contrary one. He (Mr. Maule) had forwarded a *fac-simile* of his letter to Lord Gough, directing him to make further inquiry respecting it.

SUGAR IN BREWING.

MR. HINDLEY inquired whether all persons would be allowed by the Government plan to use sugar in brewing?

The CHANCELLOR OF THE EXCHEQUER stated, that at present any persons not selling beer might use sugar in brewing; and the Government proposed to take off the restriction on the use of sugar in brewing with respect to all persons whatsoever.

STATE OF IRELAND.

LORD J. RUSSELL spoke as follows: Sir, I feel that I never had so much need of the indulgence of the House as I have upon the present occasion; but I feel, at the same time, that I never had so little need to ask for that indulgence, for I feel sure, from the temper which the House has already displayed, from the sense which prevails of the magnitude of the calamity that has occurred, and of the further calamity still impending—from its sense of the danger that would arise in now interposing any party feelings with the consideration of this subject—and from the forbearance which I have already experienced—I feel sure that I need not, on the present occasion, ask its indulgence, but that it will be voluntarily bestowed. In considering the question of the state of Ireland, I will first proceed to lay down the order in which I propose to treat the subject. I propose to notice, first, generally, what is the condition of that part of the United Kingdom in which this calamity has occurred; secondly, to make a general statement of what has been done during the recess of Parliament—what has been done in pursuance of Acts of Parliament—how far those measures have succeeded—how far I think they have been deficient; and then to state what we propose to do to meet the present emergency and at the present time. After having made that statement, I shall ask the attention of the House, while I proceed to invite some consideration of other measures which are calculated, in the opinion of Her Majesty's Government, to improve the general condition of Ireland, and to lay the foundations for permanent prosperity. I shall also take the liberty of mentioning some other subjects which, although they have been under consideration, have not yet been so fully considered that measures concerning them have been matured; and I will state generally the view which we take of those subjects. I shall, in conclusion, ask the assent of the House to the introduction of two Bills, one for the purpose of rendering valid certain acts which have been done under the authority of the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, as communicated in a letter of my right hon. Friend near me, the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant; and the second, a Bill for the improvement of private estates in Ireland, in the spirit of the Treasury Minute of the 1st of December, which is well known to this House and to the country. Sir, in proceeding to consider the condition of the country in which this calamity has occurred, I think it the safest course to use the guarded language of the report made on the inquiry respecting provision made by Poor Laws in Ireland, and to ask the House to infer from that report how great was likely to be the calamity if there should be a total failure of the potato crop in that country. In the First Report of that Poor Inquiry Commission—a commission including many persons of considerable authority, who were Irishmen, and well acquainted with their country—they give their reason for not making a report so soon as was expected, and they say—

> "The great proportion of the population about and amongst whom the inquiry was to be made is constantly fluctuating between mendicancy and independent labour. In whole districts, scarcely one of that class of substantial capitalist farmers so universal in England can be found. The small resident gentry are but few, and the substantial tradesman is not to be met with at intervals of two or three miles, as in England; for there are but few towns of sufficient trade to create such a class. The clergy of the various persuasions, and the proprietors, when resident, are in many cases so much at variance with each other, or with the working population, upon political questions, that great caution was requisite in regard to the manner and degree in which we could avail ourselves of their assistance. Similar difficulties existed with regard to the constabulary, from the frequent collisions in which they are placed with the people; and parochial authorities can scarcely be said to exist."

In their Third Report, which was the foundation of the measure that was then adopted, they state—

> "It appears that in Great Britain the agricultural families constitute little more than a fourth, while in Ireland they constitute about two-thirds of the whole population; that there were in Great Britain, in 1831, 1,055,982 agricultural labourers; in Ireland, 1,131,715, although the cultivated land of Great Britain amounts to about 34,250,000 acres, and that of Ireland only to about 14,600,000. We thus find that there are in Ireland about five agricultural labourers for every two that there are for the same quantity of land in Great Britain. It further appears that the agricultural produce of Great Britain is more than four times that of Ireland; that agricultural wages vary from 6*d.* to 1*s.* a day; that the average of the country in general is about 8½*d.*; and that the earnings of the labourers come, on an average of the whole class, to from 2*s.* to 2*s.* 6*d.* a week, or thereabouts, for the year round. Thus circumstanced, it is impossible for the able-bodied, in general, to provide against sickness or the temporary absence of employment, or against old age, or the destitution of their widows and children, in the contingent event of their own premature decease. A great portion of them are insufficiently provided at any time with the commonest necessaries of life. Their habitations are wretched hovels; several of a family sleep together upon straw or upon the bare ground, sometimes with a blanket, sometimes even without so much to cover them; their food commonly consists of dry potatoes, and with these they are at times so scantily supplied as to be obliged to stint themselves to one spare meal in the day. There are even instances of persons being driven by hunger to seek sustenance in wild herbs. They sometimes get a herring, or a little milk; but they never get meat, except at Christmas, Easter, or Shrovetide. Some go in search of employment to Great Britain during the harvest; others wander through Ireland with the same view. The wives and children of many are occasionally obliged to beg; they do so reluctantly and with shame, and in general go to a distance from home, in order that they may not be known. Mendicancy, too, is the sole resource of the aged and impotent of the poorer classes in general, when children or relatives are unable to support them. To it, therefore, crowds are driven for the means of existence; and the knowledge that such is the fact leads to an indiscriminate giving of alms, which encourages idleness, imposture, and general crime."

Such was the description, given upon the most undoubted authority, of the state of the labouring classes in Ireland, even amidst times of comparative plenty: it may be easily imagined that when those who are best off, in the most prosperous years, earn scarcely sufficient, those who had then been on the brink of famine, must have been unable to resist the flood of destitution and wretchedness which has overwhelmed them by the failure of the potato crop. Such has been unfortunately the case in the present year, during the visitation of a calamity which is, perhaps, almost without a parallel, because it acts upon a very large population, a population of nearly 8,000,000—for the Irish have gradually increased to that amount—while the famine is such as has not been known in modern times; indeed, I should say it is like a famine of the thirteenth century acting upon the population of the nineteenth. Such being the general condition of the population, and the nature of the calamity that has befallen them, I will state what is the course which was adopted during the past year and down to the present time. When Parliament met last year, it was apprehended, that the potatoes having been much injured, there was danger of a very great scarcity in that country. That apprehension was not fully justified by the event. It was impossible, as I think, for any one exactly to say, what the extent of the misfortune would be; but the fact, I believe, was, there having been a very plentiful crop of potatoes in the previous year, that although there was a very great quantity of potatoes injured in 1845, yet the quantity of food in Ireland in the early part of last year was not very deficient. Parliament, however, took means very early in the Session to supply food to the destitute by means of giving employment upon the roads, and by public works. It was enacted, that upon presentment sessions being held in any barony, there should be a power to apply for money from the Treasury upon loan, and there should be a grant of money. Under this law, presentments were made to the extent of more than 1,000,000*l*., I think; the presentments to the 31st of August, I believe, were 1,372,000*l*.; what was recommended by the Board of Works amounted to 476,000*l*., and there was actually expended to that time 290,000*l*. Before the end of the Session of Parliament, upon the recommendation of the present Government, Parliament passed a further Act, by which, on the one hand, the Lord Lieutenant was enabled to require special barony sessions to meet, in order to make presentments for public works; and, on the other hand, as a check to what it was thought might be expected in the shape of extravagant expenditure, the whole was to be advanced by the Treasury, and all the money was afterwards to be repaid. Very soon after the Session of Parliament had closed, there was a desire in many parts of Ireland to have presentment sessions, and to have public works sanctioned by the Government, but more especially there was a great demand to have those public works continued and completed which had been authorized by the Act of the early part of last Session. There was some objection made on the part of the Treasury to that proceeding, because the harvest was just coming in; there was a great demand for labour, and it did not seem to us, as these were works intended solely for relief, that it was advisable to complete them; however, it being put before us as a matter of good faith, an order was given that those works should be completed. But these operations, and the demand for new works, made it extremely difficult for the Board of Works, although it was reinforced by the addition of two gentlemen exceedingly competent, I believe, for the task assigned them, to make all their arrangements before these presentments came upon them in great numbers. Very soon, however, after the works were commenced, there came a complaint on the part of the proprietors and country gentlemen in Ireland, that these works were useless; that the roads which were presented for were not wanted; that other works were likewise in themselves useless; and that they were not reproductive measures. I own I do not myself attach any great value to that objection. I think, the object being relief, and to combine that relief with a certain amount of work which should show that industry was not entirely abandoned, that the productive nature of the works was a question of secondary importance, and that the use for which they were intended was to preserve the people, in the first place, from loss of life, and, in the next place, from the indiscriminate asking of alms. In this country, during the distress which happened four or five years ago, in the course of one or two years the poor rates were increased from 4,000,000*l*. to 5,000,000*l*., an increase of 1,000,000*l*. a year; but, if an examination were made into the manner in which that million was expended, it would not be found that there was any great amount of productive works to show for it; it must have been spent either in direct relief, or relief with such occupations as are given to poor men, in order to separate the man who is really destitute from the impostor. Therefore, I do not, I say, myself attach any very great value to the objection which was thus made; but, at the same time, as it was most desirable to obtain the co-operation of the landed gentlemen of Ireland, it was desirable likewise, if possible, to have the works productive. The Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, with the consent of the Cabinet, after the case had been represented, sanctioned a plan by which the sessions were allowed to present for productive works in electoral districts. But this plan had not been long adopted before there was a still further desire expressed for what was called a townland division, and that the works should be separately presented for townlands. Now, these townlands are of various sizes and dimensions in Ireland: some of them are exceedingly small, not above a hundred acres, others are of a tolerable size; but I believe, taking a general average of the whole townlands of Ireland, they do not contain above 350 acres each. The question was, whether it were possible to accede to such a demand. It was quite obvious that, if it were permitted that every person who was the proprietor or occupier of a townland should only make himself responsible for his own townland, there would be no general interest felt in providing for the destitute, and more especially that the possessor of grass land, or of land from which there had been clearance, would have some two or three destitute to provide for, while hundreds were pressing upon the means of other townlands, and ruining the proprietors. It appeared, therefore, to the Lord Lieutenant, and, as far as I have heard, it appeared to almost every person, even those who were at first advocates of this plan, that it could not be beneficially adopted. But it was said, that although that plan could not be adopted, yet there was another scheme which might, and which would prevent the evil of those who were ready to employ labour, ready to be enterprising, ready to improve their estates, being obliged to maintain the tenants and labourers of those who entirely neglected their duty towards them—and that was the plan of allowing the townland division to take place, but obliging the proprietors and occupiers of the townlands to employ a certain number of the destitute, so as to spend the whole amount of the assessment which was laid upon them. Now, upon this subject I do not know that anything better can be said than the observations which were made upon it in a public letter by Mr. Smith O'Brien, a Member of this House, in a letter to the proprietors of Ireland. He said that he thought it was better than the plan which was actually in operation; but he went on to say—

> "It will, however, have the effect of still further pauperizing the labour of the country. To elucidate this result in the simplest manner, let us suppose that there are 100 labourers in a district which belongs to two landlords, whose income is equal, and one of whom now employs fifty independent workmen, whilst the other does not employ a single labourer. It is at present necessary to provide for the maintenance of fifty unemployed labourers. These are now set to work upon the roads, and the expense of their maintenance falls upon the two properties in equal proportions. If the proposed plan be adopted, the improving landowner will naturally desire to exempt himself from taxation, without employing more hands than he at present requires. This he could do by dismissing all his present workmen. There would then be 100 surplus labourers in the district. As these must be maintained at the expense of the two properties, each proprietor would eventually be compelled, in self-defence, to employ fifty. The landowner who originally employed this number will thus escape taxation, without engaging more labour than he requires; but his labourers will cease to be independent workmen, chosen and paid by himself, and subject to his own control. They will be sent to him by the relief committee of the district; they will be placed under the superintendence of an expensive staff of stipendiaries, appointed by the Board of Works, and will be paid out of the funds raised for the relief of the poor. A system not very dissimilar to this was acted upon in several parts of England previous to the Poor Law Amendment Act of 1831, and was found to produce effects the most demoralizing to the labouring population—paralysing all the energy of independent labour and individual enterprise, and, in many respects, operating most unjustly upon particular classes of property."

I conceive that these observations of the hon. Member for Limerick are perfectly justifiable. The experience of England was as he describes it to have been; the labourers sent by the parish upon the farm in the occupation of a farmer were not like the men whom he employed himself at his own choice; they were idle and improvident men, and almost every farmer who was conversant with that system would say that he would rather give 10*s*. a week to a labourer whom he chose himself, than 5*s*. to one of those useless men who were sent to him by the parish. I think, therefore, that the plans proposed in order to remedy the evil of having so many persons engaged in unproductive labour in Ireland were full of danger. I admit, and shall presently state, the great evils of the present system; but I think we should have incurred still greater danger, if, with a view of remedying those evils, we had done that which, I conceive, is one of the most pernicious things that can be done with the labour of a country—if we had confounded independent labour with poor relief—if we had rendered paupers those who ought to be independent labourers, and, by way of making our relief somewhat more efficient, had permanently injured the great and important class to which those labourers belong. Sir, the landowners and proprietors who were in favour of these alterations, not obtaining them, found great practical difficulty in carrying into effect the instructions issued by the Lord Lieutenant. They found, when they came to deal with an electoral district, that while two proprietors in that district were ready to adopt the reproductive works, a third or a fourth utterly refused to have any money advanced to him for those purposes. They found, therefore, that their operations were useless; that they did but in a small degree diminish their liabilities; and therefore the proceeding, although it has been to a great degree acted on, has not been such a complete substitution for the system of public works as it was at first supposed that it would be. But, Sir, as the plans were carried out, the number of the destitute increased, and with the number of the destitute the difficulties were augmented of putting any plans of the kind into safe and beneficial operation. I should say that, in the first place, notwithstanding the pains taken by the Board of Works for the purpose of having efficient persons under them, it was found impossible to have trustworthy and efficient persons for works so extensive. It was found, in the next place, that the labourers very often refused to undertake the tasks allotted to them; and more than one of the persons who endeavoured to induce the parties employed to labour well for the wages given to them were maltreated; more than one were in danger of their lives, in consequence of their efforts to discharge their duty. But at length the plan has proceeded to such an extent that it is quite impossible for any public board efficiently to superintend so vast an amount of work. The establishment of the Board of Works—I shall not read all the particulars, the names and titles given of the officers, chief clerks, check clerks, and pay clerks, but the total number of the persons employed—amounts to 11,587. The number of baronies into which Ireland is divided is 360, and of this number 285 have held presentment sessions, and the amount of presentments sanctioned up to this date is 2,410,216*l.* The number of labourers has increased from 30,135 in the month of September, to 440,687 in the month of December. According to last week's account it was more than 480,000; and there is no doubt entertained at the present time that they amount to 500,000 persons. It is not to be supposed that there is not very great utility in having employed these persons. It is reckoned that five persons gain their subsistence from every person who is employed. I doubt the accuracy of the estimate; but taking it at four, there are 2,000,000 of persons who are subsisted by labour on the public works. The expense at the same time has been enormous. The weekly estimate on the first week of December was 114,000*l.*; on the second week, 156,000*l.*; on the third week, 158,000*l.*; on the fourth week, 154,000*l.*; and, so far as we are acquainted with the three weeks of January which have elapsed, the estimate for the first week was 157,000*l.*, for the week beginning the 9th, 156,000*l.*; and for the week beginning the 16th, 172,000*l.*; making the total amount 585,000*l.* in the whole of December, and 485,000*l.* in three weeks of January. It is estimated that the whole expense this month will be between 700,000*l.* and 800,000*l.* It is impossible to view this immense expenditure, in an undertaking of so vast a nature, without seeing that there must be great concomitant evils attending such operations. There must be great evils at any time, but there are peculiar evils in the present state of Ireland. One of those evils is owing to the difficulties I have just stated were experienced in procuring efficient labour from the people employed. When the works commenced it was generally reported to us by persons who had travelled through the country, that these people were to be seen loitering idly about the roads doing no work. The Irish Government said that task-work ought to be introduced. There was considerable difficulty in carrying out that resolution, and much resistance was made for the first two or three weeks. But the Lord Lieutenant was peremptory upon that point, and task-work was introduced. So far a good example was set. But a new evil sprang up, which was, that those men who became accustomed to task-work earned wages considerably more than any money wages which could otherwise be got. They earned 1*s.* 4*d.*, and 1*s.* 6*d.*, and 1*s.* 10*d.* a day, in some cases; and there was a very great run upon the public works, a general competition to be placed upon the public works; and the farmers could not obtain the labourers they wished to employ. But, more than this, a very great abuse sprang up; and farmers and persons holding 20, 30, 40, 50, or 60 acres of land, obtained tickets from the relief committees, and placed either their sons, or men employed on their farms, upon the relief works, and received the money which ought to have gone to the really destitute. And thus, with an immense expenditure for the relief of destitution, there were very great numbers of destitute persons who did not receive the benefit. Sir, I shall read part of a letter from Colonel Jones, who is at the head of the Board of Public Works, written so late as the 19th of January to Mr. Trevelyan. The Secretary of the Treasury, Colonel Jones, says—

> "We are pressed for instructions by our officers to know how they are to act; those which now regulate their actions are no longer applicable to the altered state of affairs; if they refuse employment they are held up as the stumbling-block to the poor between them and the means of obtaining food. I am of opinion that it would be better in many cases to give food than to be paying money away as we are now obliged to do, at the same time the people are discontented at the small sums they are entitled to. The fact is, that the system of task-work is no longer beneficial employment to many; their bodily strength is gone, and their spirits depressed, they have not power to exert themselves sufficiently to earn the ordinary day's wages; this necessary outlay will be stigmatized as a wasteful expenditure, and the works will be left incomplete. Mr. Barry, our fishery inspector, has just returned from Glandore, near Clonakelty. The accompanying is a short statement of affairs in that district. You will perceive the great benefits derived from the soup establishments—and so very cheap in the preparation; the small amount of nourishment has a very great effect upon the famished individuals whose stamina are thus partially revived. So far as we are concerned, I believe our powers have attained the utmost. We have, I trust, made a good stand; but the numbers which are now forcing themselves upon us will incapacitate our officers from affording employment, and all our efforts, hitherto so successful, will be paralysed."

Sir, the opinion of the Government, previously to the receipt of this letter, was, that the system had become so vast, and, at the same time, the destitution and the want of food had so greatly increased, that it was desirable to attempt some other temporary scheme, by which, if possible, some of the evils which they have now to meet might be mitigated, and with so vast an expenditure of money that more effectual relief should be afforded. It has appeared to us, that it will be desirable to form in districts—say electoral districts—relief committees, which relief committees shall be empowered to receive subscriptions, levy rates, and receive donations from the Government; that by means of these they should purchase food, and establish soup kitchens in the different districts; that they should, so far as they are able, distribute rations with this purchased food to the famishing inhabitants; and that, furnishing that food, they should not require as indispensable the test of work, but that labouring men should be allowed to work on their own plots of ground, or for the farmers, and thus tend to produce food for the next harvest, and procure, perhaps, some small wages to enable them to support their families. After we considered this scheme, I communicated it to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland. We have consulted the various officers of the Board of Works and at the head of the Commissariat. They are prepared to consider it favourably; and we shall endeavour, first by a preparatory measure, and next by a Bill, to be proposed to Parliament, to carry into effect this arrangement. There is a person in this country conversant with Ireland, having been long engaged in the public works of that country, who earned, not only the general esteem of the Governments he has served, but of the people among whom his operations were carried on. The person to whom I allude is Sir John Burgoyne. He is now inspector of Government fortifications in this country; and my wish was, that he should undertake this task. I sent for him the other day, in order to propose that he should undertake it. He told me that he had obtained three months leave of absence, and that, instead of devoting those three months to relaxation from the duties he was performing, he was quite willing to devote them to the service of the country, and go, at any time he was required, on the discharge of the duty which I proposed. He will be in communication with the Lord Lieutenant, and will have the cooperation of Colonel Jones, and the Board of Works, of the Commissariat, the head of the Poor Law Commission, the chief of the Constabulary, and of other persons who are competent and ready to give him assistance. In proposing this measure, with the view of affording, if possible, more efficient means of relieving the poor people who now are in want of food, and, at the same time, of setting loose great numbers of persons for the ordinary operations of agriculture, we must take care—and the Lord Lieutenant is prepared to take care—that the substitution of this system for public works shall be made as easy in the transition as possible. There will be no rude dismissal of the people at once, who otherwise might find great difficulty in obtaining subsistence; but when the arrangements are made for carrying the scheme I have described into effect, it will be provided that no further presentment shall be made, and no new public works undertaken. The

Lord Lieutenant says, in regard to many roads which have been begun, that, if now abandoned, they will be left in the most incomplete and inconvenient state, and that it is desirable to devise some mode in which that difficulty can be obviated, and these roads completed. With regard to the money which has been already expended, and is now being expended, upon these public works, a claim has been made, that the whole of it should not be a burden upon Ireland. The calamity is so severe and extensive, that, passing by the remote causes of it, and looking how heavily it has pressed upon the present possessors of property in Ireland—upon the whole, I think it right that the whole burden should not remain upon Irish property. We shall, therefore, propose, on a future day, that an arrangement should be made by Parliament, by which, in each succeeding year, when an instalment becomes due, upon half that instalment being paid, the other half shall be remitted. We propose, however, that the whole debt should be kept up till one half of it is paid; and that when the half of it is paid, the remainder should be remitted; and thus it will be provided, that one half of the whole charge should fall upon the public. I should state, on the financial part of this question, as regards the sums now issued, that they are issued out of the balance in the Exchequer—out of the Consolidated Fund; and that neither is there, nor has there been, any intention of making any new issue of Exchequer Bills to meet that demand. But it must at the same time be considered, that when I make such a proposition as that now laid before the House, it is one which places a very considerable burden upon the finances of this country; and that placing that burden upon the finances of this country, I do feel myself disabled from making some propositions I should otherwise have made, but which, considering the very heavy burdens arising from the destitution this present year, I should think it hardly fair to the people of this country to bring forward. It may be said, "Let the burden be borne by the Consolidated Fund—let it be borne by the Imperial Treasury and Exchequer." I must always recollect that those sums are not to be granted by Government or Parliament without the most serious consideration; that these are sums derived from payments by the people of this country; from the taxes which they pay on their soap, their sugar, their tea, their coffee. It is that which forms the surplus by which we are able to come to the assistance of Ireland; and while I believe there is every disposition to do all that is liberal, I do think that we must, in justice to the people of this country, consider their difficulties and their privations, and by what hard labour they are earning their daily bread. As to the other part of this subject which I mentioned, namely, the advances made under authority of the Lord Lieutenant's order, and of the letter of my right hon. Friend (Mr. Labouchere)—the advances having been made to persons who really wished to assist in carrying this measure into effect, and to effect improvements, making their own estates liable—we do think it necessary that the terms of the Treasury Minute of the 1st of December should be applied to those who have accepted advances under Mr. Labouchere's letter, and that instead of requiring repayment in ten years, a period of twenty-two years shall be taken; that the provisions for carrying this proposal into effect should be in terms of the Drainage Act of last year; and that, in regard to its beneficial employment, the whole of that money will be expected to be paid as under that Act. Sir, I have stated what I think we can do for present alleviation. There is, however, another question on which I have to make a somewhat, I must confess, doubtful proposal; but upon the whole we think we are right in recommending it to Parliament. It is, that we should be empowered to advance a sum not exceeding 50,000*l*. in the whole, to be repaid before the end of this year, the 31st of December, 1847, to enable the proprietors to furnish seed for the land. I do not think it a safe course that the Government should make advances to small tenants. It is very dangerous that the Government should be introduced as the lender to a great number of cottier tenants and other occupants of small holdings; but if the money be advanced to the landlords, it may be given for their tenantry to purchase seed, and so may be most beneficially applied. In stating these measures, I wish at the same time to declare, that we cannot expect, and that we do not expect, to be able by any measures which the Government, or by any measures which Parliament may adopt, to ward off or prevent the effects of the awful visitation under which Ireland is suffering. It is not in the power of man to do away with the effects of such a calamity. Nor, Sir, should I think that any one would impose upon us so impossible a task, or ask us to make so presumptuous an attempt, were it not that I have read in one of the newspapers an address signed by the Marquess of Sligo and Mr. Moore, both most respectable persons—both persons well entitled to deference on the part of their poorer countrymen—who write thus to these countrymen, having, as it said in the newspaper, travelled through twenty-seven counties in order to make their proposition popular and acceptable:—

> "We, therefore, earnestly entreat you to meet at Castlebar, at 11 o'clock on Monday next, quietly, peaceably, and like men worthy of the rights you meet to demand—then and there to petition Parliament to take such steps as may insure an immediate, constant, and cheap supply of food for the people of this country during the famine that surrounds us, and the famine that is impending. We feel confident that a demand thus boldly but constitutionally made, will be promptly responded to, and that by a strong and decided effort in the people's cause, the people will yet be saved."

I must confess I am astonished at this. I am astonished that, at a time of famine, men of education, that men who ought to lead their countrymen, should tell them that they were to demand from Parliament "such steps as may insure an immediate, constant, and cheap supply of food." Why, Sir, this is a task which is impossible for us—a task which they ought to tell their countrymen the destitution under which they are suffering has made impossible for man—a task which is beyond all human power; and that all that we can possibly do is in some measure to alleviate the existing distress—somewhat to lighten the dreadful calamity which afflicts them; and it is their duty to say to these people, "You are not to imagine that the Government can turn scarcity and even famine into plenty." But what surprises me more in this announcement is, that it so happens that at Castlebar, where the people of the surrounding country are requested to meet, there is an union workhouse, which union workhouse ought to contain 600 inmates, but which at present contains not more than 130, the doors being closed against other persons by the guardians saying that it is impossible for them to levy the rates in order to enable those other persons who are in want of food to come into the workhouse. Amongst those who have not paid their rates—who have not furnished the money by which the famine might in some degree be averted—are some of those who we cannot but suppose are fully able to pay what is due from them. Sir, I cannot but see in this proposal an unhappy tendency—an unhappy tendency which I have more than once remarked—to recommend to others to do some vague and impossible duty—to call upon the Government or Parliament to do something the practicability of which has not been considered—to confer some benefit, it may be of a visionary and impossible kind; while the plain and practical duty of paying the rates for the assistance of the starving men, women, and children in their neighbourhood is left neglected and forgotten. Sir, I am obliged to say, therefore, that while we attempt all that we think practicable, we must, in the first place, refuse to make promises of doing that which is out of our power; and in the next place, we must call upon and expect those who have local duties to perform in Ireland, to perform those duties, and to assist the Government and Parliament in their arduous duty; and when I say that I expect this, I am quite sure that many will perform it, because I know that in many, very many instances, the resident proprietors in Ireland have been most ready with their money, with their time, and with their attendance in endeavouring to provide for the relief of their destitute countrymen. I proceed then to another part of the subject, and I trust that the House will give me their attention while I ask them to follow the proposal of other measures which we think may be beneficial, not only now, but permanently, to Ireland. Let me say, in the first place, that I think, that although, unhappily, we have been diverted from the observance of general principles with respect to these matters, yet I do think that we ought to observe general principles as far as possible, and that these general principles prescribe thus much with respect to the interference of the Government. That interference may be given in three ways, and these three ways ought, as far as possible, to be kept separate and distinct. First, the Government, with the support of Parliament, may grant assistance to individual proprietors for the purpose of enabling them to improve their private properties. Secondly, it may assist them in public works by making roads, or partly by grants in aid of public works, which are evidently of public utility. And thirdly, it may enact that relief should be given by law to the destitute. Now, I think that these three modes should be kept as far as possible distinct—that is to say, that when money is advanced to private individuals for the purpose of improving their property, you should take security so far that it is used for that purpose, and not spent in extravagancies in Paris or Naples; but that beyond this there should be as little interference as possible with the outlay of the money—that there should be as little interference as possible, for instance, to compel the proprietors to employ a certain class of labourers, or to conduct their works in a certain particular manner which the Government may lay down as the best, or in any other way which would prevent the proprietors having the free use of the money advanced. Such is the principle of the first measure of which I am about to speak. It is a measure founded upon various Acts which have been passed by this House at different times up to the Drainage Act of last Session, and upon the terms given to the public in the Treasury Minute of the 1st December last. According to those Acts, and to that Minute, it is proposed, that where the improvement of estates by drainage, or by any other improvement, such as the reclamation of waste lands, will produce certain improvements in its value, so that the legal heirs might not be prejudiced—in that case certain advances shall be made from the public funds of this country. The usual rate for advances from the Treasury is 5 per cent; in the Drainage Act of last year it was 3½ per cent, with repayment in twenty-two years, making 6½ per cent each year till the expiry of the twenty-two years, by which time the whole sum borrowed was to be repaid. Now we propose to take the terms proposed in the Drainage Act, and extend them to the various improvements mentioned. We propose not to confine the improvements to drainage, and to do away with certain technicalities which, according to that Act—but for which, I may remark, the noble Lord opposite (Lord Lincoln) was not responsible—(they were introduced after the Bill had left his hands)—made it difficult for tenants for life to borrow money. We intend to do away with this technical difficulty, and to advance money to enable proprietors to improve their estates—such advances to be at the rate of 3½ per cent, and on condition of its being repaid in twenty-two years; or, if it should happen to be more convenient for the borrower, in a shorter time. I am convinced that it will be much better to place in this Act now proposed a scheme of this nature, than to continue the plan which has been laid down by the Lord Lieutenant, or to combine it with any plan for the relief of the poor, for the reason I have before stated, that the two plans ought to be kept separate and distinct. According to this plan, a great many men will find profitable employment, who otherwise might be excluded from the field of labour, or who would otherwise be destitute, and it will also be of great advantage to the proprietors. We propose, also, with respect to more general works, to consolidate and amend the Drainage Acts now on the Statute-book. According to those acts, in certain cases proprietors of a district may meet and agree to ask a loan for the improvement of their estates by drainage; and if the majority so agree, the minority are bound to join them. Now, in those cases, the drainage will be undertaken by the Board of Works, or carried on under their superintendence. But this alludes to drainage of a more general nature. It will not take place on the private estates of proprietors; it is applicable only to streams and rivers, and other operations of that kind, by which the country will be much improved. We propose, therefore, to consolidate and amend those Acts. It is on the same principle of performing public works that we propose to undertake the reclamation of a portion of the waste lands of Ireland. It has long been stated, in various reports of Commissioners, in reports of Committees of this House, and by eminent writers, that in many cases the reclamation of the waste lands of Ireland would produce profitable employment to the people, and make the lands of great value. Sir R. Kane, in his work *On the Industrial Resources of Ireland*, says, that the estimate that there are 4,600,000 acres of waste land in Ireland which might be reclaimed and formed into cultivated lands, was perfectly correct, and that it was by no means an exaggerated estimate. We propose to devote 1,000,000*l*. to this purpose, and we propose that the land should, if the proprietor be willing to part with it, be purchased; but that if he does not improve it by accepting a loan under this measure, or out of his own resources, and if he refuses to sell, there shall be a compulsory power to the Commissioners of Woods and Forests to take and improve waste lands which are below a certain value. The land which we propose to estimate, is land which is below a certain value, say 2*s*. 6*d*. per acre. [Mr. GOULBURN: Is that the annual value?]

That is the annual value. We propose that such lands shall only be improved and reclaimed so far as general operations are concerned; that roads shall be made; that general drainage shall be effected, and the necessary buildings erected; but that no cultivation of the land shall take place under the direction of a public department; and that the lands having been so reclaimed, shall be divided into lots, which shall not be below a certain amount, nor above a certain amount. I am not at present prepared to fix this amount absolutely, but say that they shall not be less than twenty-five nor more than fifty acres, or some proposal of that kind; and that when these lots have been reclaimed, they may be either sold or let to tenants for a certain number of years, with a determination that the lands let shall be sold at the end of that time. It is intended that we shall not confine ourselves either to letting or sale, but to act as may be found expedient in each particular case. I own that I expect that great advantages will gradually arise from this plan, if it be adopted. I expect that a great number of persons who have hitherto been driven to despair, and many of them into crime, by the great demand for land, will be placed in those holdings, and be able to earn a comfortable living by the produce of their labour. I think likewise, with respect to those who purchase them, that we shall, by means of the land reclaimed and purchased, raise a class of small proprietors, who by their industry and independence will form a valuable link in the future social condition of Ireland. Let me say here, that I do not think—so far as I have been able to form a judgment —that such holdings are the great evil in Ireland. I believe that the particular mode in which land is held has very often been a source of evil in that country, but I do not think that the small divisions have been injurious; and I am the more confirmed in this opinion by finding, that one of the counties in which there is the greatest division—I mean the county of Armagh—is notoriously one of the most flourishing and best cultivated in Ireland. If you compare it or the whole province of Ulster with the province of Munster, you will find that there are many more small holdings, and that property is more divided in the former than in the latter. I believe, therefore, that in adopting a plan of this kiud, with the compulsory power I have described, a very great advantage will be obtained. I now come to the third class of measures; but before passing to that, let me here make this observation, that in stating now the measures which we propose immediately, or almost immediately, to bring into Parliament, I am not stating all the measures which we have in contemplation, and which we may hereafter bring forward. But I am now stating the measures which are calculated, as we think, to promote the improvement of Ireland, by enabling the proprietors to obtain funds sufficient to make improvements on their estates, and also by affording means by which works of a more public nature may be carried into effect. I now come to the third class of measures to which I have alluded—that class of measures the object of which is simply to afford relief to the destitute. It will be remembered that when the Poor Law Commission of Inquiry made their Report, they advised that all of a certain class should be relieved; and in that class they included all those who were infirm and permanently disabled. We thought, upon the whole, that it was safer, in the first instance, to have workhouses erected in Ireland—not to confine relief to any particular class of persons, but to allow relief to be given to the destitute able-bodied as well as to the destitute infirm; but to confine that relief to the workhouses. It is not only the experience of the present state of things, but it is an opinion formed upon general views of the state of Ireland, that the poor law ought to be more extensive than it now is. I shall, therefore, propose to bring in a Bill—which is a Bill for the more effectual relief of the destitute poor of Ireland—which shall enact that the guardians of the poor be required to give relief, either in or out of the workhouse, at their discretion, to the infirm and to all those who are permanently disabled by bodily infirmity. I am convinced that this ought to be done, and it will be the means, in the first place, of enabling the guardians to make use of the workhouse for its proper function as a test of destitution; and in the second place, it will enable them to afford relief to that unfortunate class of persons in their own houses—a course which will be both more satisfactory to the general feelings of the people of that country, and more useful in the future working of the system. We propose, likewise, when the workhouse is full, that the Poor Law Commissioners shall have power to direct that in such cases the guardians may give relief out of the workhouse to the able-bodied poor. I am of opinion, however, that this is a power which should be cautiously used. I am of opinion that the workhouse should always be kept as a test for able-bodied destitution. But at the same time, as we have seen, there are cases where the workhouses are insufficient to afford accommodation to all the unfortunate persons who are crowding round their doors; we think the Poor Law Commissioners should have power in these cases to make an exception. With respect to able-bodied paupers, I may remark that relief will be given in food only. We likewise propose that there should be relieving officers appointed, and that it should be the duty of such relieving officers, in cases of urgent distress, where there is a danger of starving on the part of persons applying, to give relief, either in or out of the workhouse, until the next meeting of the board of guardians, who shall make provision for such cases according to the general rules which they have sanctioned. Such, therefore, is the nature of the measures which we purpose to introduce immediately. There are, as I have already stated, other measures which have been, and are, under the consideration of the Government. Connected with the first class of measures to which I have alluded, namely, those which are to enable proprietors to make a better use of their property, to increase their capital, and to improve their estates, we have under consideration a measure for facilitating the sale of incumbered estates. There are two modes by which this may be done. One is by adopting the general principle of the Copyhold Enfranchisement Act. Every one knows that Bills are passed in every Session to allow certain individuals to sell portions of their estates, in order to enable them to pay off incumbrances. As one way of carrying into effect the principle to which I have just alluded, I would propose that there should be a general law giving commissioners power to examine into each case brought before them; instead of passing a private Bill in each case, that a general Bill should be passed in which should be included all such cases. Another mode of obtaining the same object has been under consideration, and this was solely by the authority of the Court of Chancery, upon application made to it for that purpose. I cannot, at this moment, say which mode will be finally prefered; all I can state is, that the subject is under consideration. We shall likewise propose a Bill by which those long leasehold tenures in Ireland which are renewable for ever may be converted into freeholds. I must say that there is nothing with respect to the general state of Ireland—nothing with respect to its present unfortunate condition, more injurious than the mode in which property is held by various tenures and under various conditions in that country. It very often happens that the proprietor in chief, as he appears to be, of large estate, obtains only a small part of the rent; another head landlord of a great property leases it under him, and the leaseholder has again a middleman under him; so that it is almost impossible to say on whom the duties of property rest. This is a subject worthy of the attention of Parliament, and I hope it will consider how tenures in Ireland may be simplified, and whether it be not possible to establish the same connexion between the proprietor and tenant and labourer in Ireland, as exists in England and Scotland. It is to the want of that connexion I attribute the fact, that, with respect to many frightful cases of destitution in Ireland which have reached the ears of the public, when inquiry has been made as to the persons who were immediately responsible for the destitution, or ought to be called upon to subscribe for the relief of the sufferers, it has been found almost impossible to ascertain upon whom the obligation rested. That is not the case in England and Scotland. In the latter country, where great destitution unfortunately prevails at the present moment, though some of the proprietors' estates are heavily incumbered and charged with debt, yet such is their connexion and sympathy with their tenantry and labourers, that they have made themselves responsible for large advances of money, by means of which alone it was possible to avert some of the dreadful consequences of the impending calamity. Under the second head of public works come fisheries, which have attracted the attention of the Government; but with respect to which I am not at present prepared to make any definite statement to the House. In the course of last autumn three establishments, in the nature of depôts, were made for facilitating the curing of fish, it having been found that, although vast quantities of fish were taken, and still greater quantities might have been caught, the people utterly neglected the adoption of any means for preserving the fish, but threw them on the ground as manure, when by their sale they might have obtained a considerable sum. Although not now prepared with any definite statement on the subject, I trust I shall soon be able to bring under the notice of the House a measure relative to the fisheries of Ireland. There is another subject, likewise, with respect to which I am not prepared to make any statement to the House, but upon which I know large expectations are entertained in Ireland—I allude to emigration. I confess I think that, although Parliament may assist emigration to a certain extent, the extravagant expectations which are entertained on this head can never possibly be fulfilled. It is stated by Sir Robert Kane, and truly, that when persons are removed from a locality by emigration, the number removed is never so large as to produce a sensible effect on the population. I do not believe that any emigration which may take place as the result of either private or public exertion, can ever, according to the ordinary amount of emigration, produce such an effect as to enable the remaining population to earn a competent amount of wages. But before we make extraordinary efforts to increase emigration, it is necessary to consider another important point. If we attempt to go beyond that which is the ordinary annual emigration, and to convey a million of persons at once across the ocean, you must look not only to the advantage which you suppose would arise from not having those persons in Ireland competing with other labourers, but you must also inquire what funds, what means, there are in the country to which they may be carried, to secure them subsistence. If by the public means, and a large addition to the public burdens, you convey a hundred thousand persons to the United States, that country would have just cause to complain of our having cast our paupers on her shores, to be maintained by her, when their maintenance was a primary obligation upon ourselves. Then, again, if we should attempt to introduce a hundred thousand emigrants into Canada, the market would be glutted by the redundant supply; and the labourers there, instead of obtaining a fair amount of the means of subsistence, as they do now, would enter into a fierce competition with each other; and thus a state of things would be produced in Nova Scotia and Canada in some respects similar to that from which the emigrants had fled at home. In considering the subject of emigration when I held the seals of the Colonial Department, I was, I confess, disposed to go further than I did, and the obstacle was of a financial nature rather than any unwillingness on my part. It appeared to me, however, that the best mode by which emigration could be promoted was by taking charge of the emigrant, not at his present place of abode, not at the port of embarkation, but at the port where he disembarked, and then convey him to some field where he would find a market for his labour. Accordingly, I proposed for that purpose a grant of money, which has since been continued, being in some years more, and in some years less, by means of which many emigrants have been conveyed to Montreal, to Kingston, and other places in the western part of Canada, and placed in situations where they could earn a subsistence. Now, the emigration which has been going on in this way of late years has been very large. In 1845 the number so emigrating to our North American colonies was 31,303, and to the United States 58,538, making altogether about 90,841. In the first three quarters of the year, 1846, which contains the great bulk of emigration, the number emigrating to the North American colonies was 42,404, to the United States 67,792, making a total number of 110,196. The character of the emigration in 1846 is very similar to that of the two previous seasons. Mr. Hawke, an emigration agent, stated, in his report, that he was not aware that the number of indigent settlers in 1846 had been much greater, in proportion, than usual; but there certainly was a large number of the Irish emigrants in a state of destitution as to clothes and bedding, far exceeding anything he had ever before witnessed. Mr. Buchanan, the agent at Quebec, stated, in his report—

> "With reference to the subject of the prospects of the emigration recently received, as well as of that anticipated, I must refer principally to the annexed report from the chief agent for Canada West. I might, at the same time, quote the reports in general of the district agents of the department. They concur in representing that there is little, if any, distress among the emigrants of the last year, unless the consequence of their own fatuity. Employment is generally to be procured at remunerative wages, and provisions and necessaries are plentiful. Some of the public works, which have hitherto afforded employment for recent emigrants, are already, or will shortly, be completed. But other works of similar character are in progress. The St. Lawrence and Atlantic Railway, the Montreal and Lachine Railway, as well as other lines about being commenced in the western section of the province, will probably demand a large amount of emigrant labour in the ensuing season. Very general attention has been recently drawn to the minerals of the country also; and it is possible that one or more associations, for mining and smelting ore, may go into

early operation. The more closely the resources of the country are examined into, the more extensive appears the field for enterprise and industry."

Seeing, then, that there had been a large amount of emigration last year—seeing that it was observed by the emigration agents that there were still a large number of pauper families from Ireland—I should be deterred from attempting to give a stimulus to emigration, which might have one of two effects: either of sending out a great number of paupers who would be unable to find employment, or, what would perhaps be equally objectionable, causing a waste of the public money by carrying at the expense of the country those who were able to obtain the means of paying for their passage, but who, instead of calling upon their friends and relatives in Canada and other colonies for assistance, would come upon the public funds. Such a system would be destructive of all habits of prudence and foresight. Sir, there are some difficulties in the way of emigration, occasioned by the provisions of the Passenger Act, under the consideration of the Government, which we hope to remove; but whatever measures we may bring forward to facilitate emigration, we wish it to be understood that we do not mean to propose any scheme of a great or extended nature. I know not whether Sir R. Kane's estimate of the resources of Ireland is to be taken altogether as a sober one; but he maintains that so great are her agricultural, independent of her other resouces—so great are her mineral resources and means of manufacturing employment by water power, that no less than 17,000,000 of people could be maintained in that country. I will not enter into that calculation; but this I will say, that I do think, if a good agricultural system was introduced into Ireland; if there was good security for the investment of money in land; if the proprietors themselves would undertake the task of improving the country, and if other classes would co-operate with them—I say I do not think the present population of Ireland is excessive. I am speaking according to the opinion of some who have very well weighed the resources of Ireland; and before I conclude, if the House will so far bear with me, I will venture to allude to countries which apparently were once in as bad a state, as far as the general condition of the population is concerned, as Ireland is now, and which are at present flourishing in possession of order, peace, and security. I think it may be productive of good to enter upon this retrospect, because I know that many persons, in contemplating the evils which have afflicted Ireland, especially at the present crisis, have been disposed to yield to despair. I do not despair of Ireland; I say there is no reason, unconnected with laws which happily have ceased to exist—unconnected with unhappy circumstances to which I do not like to advert, but which have been adverted to in the Poor Law Commissioners' Inquiry—I say that, unconnected with these circumstances, there is no reason why Ireland may not at a future day rise to a state of great happiness and prosperity. I will read the description of a country in which these evils were stated to occur by an old English writer:—

> "The husbandmen be thrust out of their own, or else, either by covin or fraud, or violent oppression, they be put beside it; or by wrongs and injuries they be so wearied that they be compelled to sell all. By one means, therefore, or by the other, either by hook or by crook, they must needs depart away, poor, wretched souls—men, women, husbands, wives, fatherless children, widows, woful mothers with their young babes, and the whole household, small in substance and much in number; as husbandry requireth many hands; away they trudge, I say, out of their known and accustomed houses, finding no place to rest in. All their household stuff, which is very little worth, though it might well abide the sale—yet, being suddenly thrust out, they be constrained to sell it for a thing of nought; and when they have wandered about till that be spent, what can they then do but steal, and then justly, *pardy*, be hanged, or else go about a-begging?"

This was a description not unlike that of parts of Ireland, where wretched families, being turned out of their holdings, were driven at once either to the commission of robbery or to go about begging. Yet the description I have read is that given of England by Sir Thomas More—that was an account of England in his day. If any one should suppose this was an effort of the imagination, I can assure him that we have other authentic accounts which corroborate it; one written by a magistrate states, that in every county there were from 200 to 300 persons who lived by thieving; that gangs carried away sheep from the field; that husbandmen had no security against their attacks; and that 70,000 of these marauders were hanged in one reign; that is a description of a country in which we now see so much security prevail, in which there is such an almost total absence of the scenes described as constantly occurring by the writers of that day. This is a proof that the evils referred to had their origin in the state of society, and not in the nature of the country. I will now read a description of another country, at a different period, namely, the end of the seventeenth century:—

> "There are at this day in Scotland (besides a great number of families very meanly provided for by the church boxes, with others who, with living upon bad food, fall into various diseases), 200,000 people begging from door to door. These are not only no ways advantageous, but a very grievous burden to so poor a country; and though the number of them be perhaps double to what it was formerly, by reason of the present great distress, yet in all times there have been about 100,000 of these vagabonds who have lived without any regard or submission either to the laws of the land, or even those of God and nature, fathers incestuously accompanying their own daughters, the son with the mother, and the brother with the sister. No magistrate could ever discover or be informed which way any of these wretches died, or that ever they were baptized. Many murders have been discovered among them; and they are not only a most unspeakable oppression to poor tenants (who if they give not bread or some sort of provision to perhaps forty such villains in one day, are sure to be insulted by them); but they rob many poor people who live in houses distant from any neighbourhood. In years of plenty, many thousands of them meet together in the mountains, where they feast and riot for many days; and at country weddings, markets, burials, and other the like public occasions, they are to be seen, both men and women, perpetually drunk, cursing, blaspheming, and fighting together."

Such was the description of industrious, sober, civilized, religious Scotland—such was the description of that country at the end of the seventeenth century. Shall we say that particular laws, that a peculiar state of society, have no influence on the condition of a population, when we find England and Scotland represented as being in this state, and afterwards becoming orderly, civilized, and prosperous? I think we should not be acting as becomes the representatives of this country if we despaired of the state of Ireland. I am not one of those who think that, apart from political rights—apart from other questions connected with political institutions, a merely beneficent Government can make a country flourish. It is my opinion that other measures will be required; and when the proper time comes for proposing such measures, I shall be ready to undertake anything which I think will be for the ultimate benefit of Ireland. But this I feel with respect to these and all other measures, that there are some things which the Crown cannot grant, which Parliament cannot enact—these are the spirit of self-reliance and the spirit of co-operation. I must say plainly, that I should indeed despair of this task, were it not that I think I see symptoms in the Irish people both of greater reliance on their own energies and own exertions, and greater willingness to co-operate with each other. I believe, if they will encourage this spirit among themselves—I believe, if they will look to what has been done in this country and in its neighbour, Scotland, by industry, by perseverance, by never despairing of success—if they will go on, not looking always to the Government proposing this, and Parliament enacting that, but will see what is the task immediately before them, and set themselves heartily and strenuously to perform that task, that there are means, there are resources, in Ireland, which may bring these matters to a happy issue. There is no doubt of the fertility of the soil: that fertility has been the theme of admiration with writers and travellers of all nations. There is no doubt of the strength and industry of the inhabitants, for the same man who is loitering idly by the mountain side in Tipperary or Kerry, whose potato crop has just furnished him with occupation for a few days, whose wages and whose pig have enabled him to pay his rent and eke out a miserable subsistence, has perhaps a brother in Liverpool, Glasgow, or London, who in the sweat of his brow is, from morning to night, competing with the strongest labourers of England and Scotland, and earning wages equal to any of them. I do not think, therefore, that either the fertility of the land or the strength and industry of the inhabitants are at fault; but there have been faults, there have been defects, and happy will it be for us if we can lay a foundation of the means of curing those defects; happy will it be, indeed, if the Irish themselves take for their maxim, "Help yourselves, and Heaven will help you;" and then I trust they will find there have been some "uses in adversity." The noble Lord concluded, by moving for leave to bring in a Bill to render valid certain proceedings for the relief of distress in Ireland.

Sir H. W. BARRON wished to ask in what manner the local rate for the relief of the poor was to be levied, and who would have the power to levy it?

Lord J. RUSSELL said, the rate would be levied by the guardians, but the local committee would administer relief, and would have the distribution of such subscriptions as might be received from this country, from Ireland, and from the Government.

Mr. B. OSBORNE thought the noble Lord had thrown some imputation on a Member of the other House of Parliament; did the noble Lord mean to imply that the Marquess of Sligo and Mr. Moore had evaded the payment of rates at Castlebar?

Lord J. RUSSELL regretted the hon. Member had misapprehended him; what he said was, that the Marquess of Sligo and Mr. Moore called a certain public meeting at Castlebar, which happened to be a place where poor rates had been refused; he did not mean to say that the Marquess of Sligo and Mr. Moore had so defaulted.

Mr. SMITH O'BRIEN asked what course the Government intended to pursue with regard to advances of money to railways; and whether it were intended to proceed with the Tenants' Compensation Bill this Session?

Lord J. RUSSELL could not enter into any details with respect to advances to railways; there were objections to making advances generally to those undertakings, but the subject was still under consideration. As to tenant compensation, no Bill would be brought in at present.

Viscount CLEMENTS wished to know if the Government intended to facilitate the employment of labour on the land in Nova Scotia and Canada, or to encourage in any way the outlay of capital in either of those colonies?

Lord J. RUSSELL said, his noble Friend at the head of the Colonial Department had forwarded a despatch to Canada, stating the willingness of the Government to advance money for the construction of huts and dwellings for the labourers while employed on railways there, if the proprietors or companies wished. But he did not know how the proposition would be received in Canada, and could not give the noble Lord a positive answer.

Mr. FRENCH commenced by stating, that an hon. Friend of his, high in the late Government, had crossed the House previous to the commencement of the debate, to say to him how much the Irish Members in general, and he (Mr. French) in particular, would disapprove of the measures to be brought forward. He had listened with fear and trembling whilst the noble Lord was speaking; but in place of opposing, he rose to express generally his concurrence with the views of Her Majesty's Government. He cordially approved of the manner in which it was proposed to carry out the Treasury Minute of the 1st of December, to enable the landlords of Ireland to afford employment to the people, by the improvement of private property—the State advancing them the money to do so on fair and equitable terms. He should not enter into details, but he thought it would be more advisable if this principle was extended to the large drainages, and that in no case should the interference in the execution of works of the Drainage Commissioners be sanctioned. He had, through the assistance of his right hon. Friend the present Chief Baron of Ireland, succeeded in having, in the Drainage Act of last Session, in cases where the proprietors were unanimous, this principle recognised. In the proposed consolidation of these Drainage Acts he concurred: the national importance of reclaiming the waste lands he fully admitted: it would be for consideration, when the measure was before the House, whether the execution of their reclamation should be entrusted to the Government or to the proprietors. To the administration of out-door relief to the aged and infirm, he had no objection to offer—the expediency of extending it to the able-bodied he questioned. The assistance to be given, under proper limits, to emigration and colonization, as auxiliaries to the general improvement of the country, he considered of the utmost importance. He hailed with satisfaction the broad line of demarcation between the temporary measures to meet the present distress, and those permanent ones for the general improvement of the country. The measures most pressing in the present crisis were food for the immediate support of the people, and seed to enable them by the cultivation of the soil to provide against the recurrence of famine in the ensuing year, and were both embraced in the measures of the noble Lord. It appeared to him their difficulties were considerably enhanced by the course adopted in the late Session of Parliament by the right hon. Baronet the Member for Tamworth; and the evils under which they were suffering were considerably aggravated by the errors he then committed. His measures, according to his own Treasury Minute, were at variance with all the rules by which the well-being of society was ordinarily regulated. His tampering with the provision trade of the country, which Burke characterized of all things the most dangerous, might have passed without observation, had not its mischievous results been tested by the real calamity of the present year. By it he created a feeling among the people of Ireland that it was the duty, and that it was in the power, of a Government to provide them with food. Hence the discontent and dissatisfaction expressed in the suffering districts against Her Majesty's present advisers for not performing impossibilities. It was not in the power of a Government, an able writer said, to provide food for us in our necessities, and it would be vain presumption in statesmen to think they can do it. Hence the state of feeling which led to such results as that of the coroner's jury in Galway, who, on an inquest on the body of a woman who died of starvation, brought in a verdict of wilful murder against Lord J. Russell and Sir Randolph Routh. Again, the right hon. Baronet appeared to him to have committed a serious error in administering out-door relief by eleemosynary employment, sanctioning, by the employment of the Board of Works, the principle of State interference in works of local or private interest, and, by the half-grant system, giving to that interference the mischievous operation which experience in that country had shown was attached to the rate in aid of wages. The right hon. Gentleman raised an insuperable obstacle to a return to the right path; he imposed on his successors an absolute coercion to go astray. How strongly did events show the wisdom of Burke when he told them—

> "If the people are fed by the State, though but for one half-year, they will never be satisfied to have it otherwise; having looked to Government for bread, on the very first scarcity they will turn and bite the hand that fed them. To avoid that evil, Government will redouble the causes of it, thus it will become inveterate and incurable."

That the noble Lord at the head of the Government saw the difficulties and was aware of the dangers of the position, was evident from his speeches—from his first Treasury Minute—from his letter to the Duke of Leinster—from his repudiation of all tampering with the provision trade—from his abolition of the half-grant system—from as large a correction of error as could be hoped for, under circumstances of such unusual and complicated difficulty; but the habit of one half-year had been established, and it was not possible to resist its urgency; and in the confusion of a newly-formed Government, and the haste of a concluding Session, the legacy of the right hon. Baronet became law. He wished to guard himself in speaking of the Poor Employment Act from being supposed to cast blame indiscriminately on those by whom it had been administered. On the contrary, he was most ready to bear testimony to the great abilities and indefatigable exertions of Colonel Jones and Captain Larcom; but the system was so extremely vicious, that no vestige of it should be permitted to remain. By it the labour of the country had been diverted from the cultivation of the soil, 486,000 men were daily employed on works not alone useless, but in most cases positively mischievous; by it the roads of the country had been uprooted, and its communications seriously interfered with. On the road from Roscommon to Athlone, a distance of fifteen miles, which was usually driven in from an hour and a half to an hour and three quarters, the mail now takes four hours, and lately applied to the Post Office for an additional hour; and the same story may be told in every district, in every parish in Ireland. Walking a few days since near Stillorgan, he came on a road which appeared as if a plough had been run through it. He put the question to a man he met on the road—had the Board of Works been there? and was answered, "No, Sir; it was a flood that destroyed this road." It would require years to get the roads back to their former condition; and it was no exaggeration to call the board by the name they were generally known by in Ireland, "wholesale destroyers of Her Majesty's highways." In coming up to attend the meeting lately held in Dublin of landed proprietors, Lord Farnham was upset in the Enniskillen mail, the Lord Lieutenant of Sligo in the Ballina, and scarcely a person there had not some complaint to make. The second evil of the system was the enormous waste of capital —180,000*l.* a week on works not alone unproductive, but which, from their nature, could not give any profitable return—"corn would not grow upon roads"—and this, in a country, where all the intelligent agriculturists united in declaring, that by a proper expenditure in drainage, the produce would be increased from 25 to 100 fold. The third evil of the system was the demoralization of the peasantry; the destruction of all reliance on their own exertions—teaching them to trust to outdoor relief; and perpetuating that adscription to the soil which had hitherto been the bane of Ireland, encouraging amongst them habits of sloth and idleness, at a time when no exertion should be spared to rouse their industrial energies. The fourth evil of the system was the disruption of the social ties, by the intervention of the board and their innumerable staff between landlord and tenant, employer and employed, making idlers of one class, and cyphers of the other. He heard with great pleasure the opinion given by the right hon. Baronet the Member for Tamworth, of the necessity for an immediate and complete abandonment of this system; for a discharge of the 11,000 engineers and clerks, and the return of employment to its legitimate channel. In Ireland the outcry became so great from landlords who, under this system and its abuses, perceived their properties melting away—from tenant-farmers whose lands remained uncultivated from the impossibility of procuring labourers, who preferred idling under the Board of Works to labouring for them, that the Lord Lieutenant was forced to issue that document, usually called Mr. Labouchere's letter, and for which his right hon. Friend had been threatened with impeachment by the hon. Member for Limerick. The noble Lord at the head of Her Majesty's Government had not correctly stated the nature of this document, nor the reasons why, though framed with the best intentions, it was utterly valueless. In order to encourage the substitution of reproductive for unproductive work, it enabled the baronies to be divided into the electoral divisions of which, under the poor law, they consisted, and presentments to be made for those drainage or other private works, provided, which the noble Lord omitted, the proprietors undertook the repayment of the money so presented. Now, as drainages, owing to the expensive staff of the Board of Works, would cost, if undertaken under this letter, double the amount they could be executed for under the control of the proprietor; and if the entire sum presented was not undertaken, the residue was to be levied for public works, for the cost of which the undertaking proprietor was to be taxed equally with the others; the landlords of Ireland very prudently declined to avail themselves of its provisions, not choosing to subject themselves to a treble taxation. The Treasury Minute of the 1st of December then made its appearance; the first step taken in the right way, and one of the most important documents in its consequences it would prove Ireland had ever seen, supported as it was to be by the different measures announced that evening. He should not, as he stated, go into details on those measures, nor even at that stage announce the portions of them he was not disposed to support. No captious objections should, however, be offered by him to any of them, nor should he offer any objection when he was not prepared to suggest an improvement. He fully agreed with the noble Lord, there was no cause to despair of Ireland, lamentable as was her condition. After her sufferings were passed, he trusted a better order of things would arise. It appeared to be a law of nature, that the amelioration or final settlement of a system, was usually preceded by a movement more or less violent and extraordinary in its character—an oppressive and pestilent atmosphere was purified by a thunder-storm. In the human body, worn out by excess or fatigue, perfect restoration to health frequently followed the crisis of a fever—in the body politic, a settled and well-balanced constitution had seldom, perhaps never, been arrived at by any nation, without being preceded by the violence and peril of a revolution; but the converse of the proposition was far from holding good. Whenever, indeed, the operation was free from the intermeddling of man, the cause and the consequence were certain. After a storm always came a calm; but a fever unskilfully treated, ended in death; and a revolution unguided by the hand of a statesman, or attempted by a people unfit for freedom, led not to a constitutional settlement, but to an abyss of anarchy or despotism more profound than that from which it emanated. Ireland, hitherto the opprobrium and difficulty of British statesmen, had now to be dealt with, and it was but just to say, that he believed all parties in that House were disposed to act fairly and liberally. They had an opportunity, which if lost, would never return. The inscrutable decrees of Providence had done that which neither kings nor parliaments could accomplish—gave them a fair and open field to work out the regeneration of Ireland; and as they availed themselves of it, so would the results of the present crisis be regarded as a blessing, or as a grievous ending curse.

Mr. BELLEW had heard the statement of the intentions of the Government with great satisfaction. He considered, as the most advantageous of the measures to be applied to Ireland, the making the property of Ireland responsible for the poverty of Ireland. England and Scotland had already felt the benefit of an enlarged poor law; and Ireland, when such a law was extended to her, would no longer be in the position of a burden upon the Imperial State. Under the present system, when the maintenance of the poor was not derived from the land, society had been in an unnatural and in a diseased state; and he hoped that the policy now announced by the noble Lord would prove to be at least the foundation of a better state of things. The Government would now wisely make the Irish landlords feel that the existence of a wretched and pauperized population must not be a matter of indifference to them, and that the owner of land in that country must be compelled to discharge the duties annexed to such a position elsewhere. When they found that in Ireland the land paid only 6*d.*, and that in England, proportionately, it paid 2*s.* for the support of the poor, they might without difficulty account for the difference to be discovered in the irrelative conditions, and draw the conclusion, that if the welfare of the sister kingdom was to be the object of their legislation, they must very speedily effect an alteration. He was far from thinking, as had elsewhere been asserted, that the landlords of Ireland, in this time of distress, had done their duty; he totally denied the fact; they had, as a class, neglected their duty, and their excuse invariably had been that they were too embarrassed in their circumstances to afford that relief to the people which the people had a right to expect from them, Why then, he said, that if a landlord was so situated as to be incapable of executing his trust and stewardship, he should cease to be the responsible owner of the land; he should be relieved from the duties he neglected. If a merchant, a banker, or a shopkeeper became insolvent, his estate was sold; and why should not the same be the case of the holder of land? If an Irish landlord did not properly discharge his duties to his tenants, it was hitherto considered to be a sufficient plea if it could be said of him, "Oh, he is a very poor man, he has not got the money to do so." He approved of what the noble Lord proposed to do as regarded the proper employment of the people. The landlords would now be enabled, as they had not hitherto been, to give employment which should be a benefit to both parties, both to the employers and to the employed. He was happy to say that one of the measures of the right hon. Baronet the Member for Tamworth, viz., the Drainage Act of last Session, was producing excellent effects throughout Ireland; but he at the same time hoped that the noble Lord now at the head of the Government would carry out his intention of amending the Drainage Act. He (Mr. Bellew) thought that it was desirable that when an officer of the Board of Works inspected a district, and was of opinion that certain public works should be commenced, notice should be given to the landowners of the district to hold a sessions to consider the desirableness of such works; and in case of their approval, he was of opinion that the officer should be authorized to commence the works, whether the landowners agreed to the necessary rates or not. He was also of opinion that the money which had been already expended in public works, would tend to conciliate the affections of the people of Ireland, by inducing them to believe that the Government were anxious to promote their welfare. At the same time the Irish landlords must be given to understand distinctly, that they would in future be compelled to discharge, equally with the English and Scotch landlords, all the responsibilities which attached to their estates.

Mr. LEFROY wished to know whether the Government proposed to take any measure which should ensure an early and large supply of food in Ireland? He did not doubt that an excellent selection had been made in the person of Sir J. Burgoyne, to carry into execution the Ministerial plans; but he doubted if the efficacy of what was proposed to be done would not be lessened, should not steps be taken to convey into the country a sufficiency of food. He wished also to ask, in what way would the 50,000*l.* to be advanced for the providing seeds to tenants be made available?

Lord J. RUSSELL: With regard to the first question, if the hon. Gentleman means to inquire, does the Government intend to import food from other countries into Ireland? I beg to inform him that it is not the intention of the Government. Having, by the measures which we have introduced, taken steps to facilitate in every way an unchecked importation of food, we think it far better to leave the supplying of the people to private enterprise and to the ordinary trade. The second question involves points of detail, and I would prefer deferring, for the present, an answer to it.

The Earl of LINCOLN, concurring in what seemed to be the general opinion of the

House, that it was advisable to postpone any lengthened discussion of the subject under consideration to a future day, rose simply to ask the noble Lord two questions connected with the question of the relief of distress in Ireland. First, as regarded the advance proposed to be made to landlords, for the purpose of enabling them to undertake the improvement of their properties, he desired to know if the intention of the noble Lord was to extend the operation of the Million Act of last year? In that Act, 2,000,000*l.* were apportioned to England and Scotland, and 1,000,000*l.* to Ireland; and he now sought from the noble Lord if he purposed naming any limit on the advance to be made to the landowner; or if, from time to time, such sums as might be required would be advanced without any limitation? The second question he wished to put had no immediate reference to what had fallen from the noble Lord; but the subject was of the utmost importance, and the intelligence received within the last few days from Ireland made it most desirable that the intentions of the Government should be fully known. He alluded to the information recently obtained, that there was an alarming increase and spread of fever in many parts of Ireland. It would be remembered that the late Government, at the early part of the last Session, were so impressed with the consequences which might follow upon an extension of sickness and fever among the distressed population—fever being invariably the consequence of the absence of food among a people—that they had passed a Bill called the Fever Act, which would expire in September next. Under that Act power had been given to the Lord Lieutenant to constitute a central board of health, and Sir Philip Frampton and Dr. Corregan had been appointed; but the present Government, under the impression that the board was unnecessary, had abolished it. He (the Earl of Lincoln) now desired to know if the Government, with a view to affording the requisite relief to the fever patients in those parts of Ireland where sickness was most prevalent, did not think great good would result if they reconstituted that board of health, either in the former or in some other shape? He also wished before sitting down to be informed, from the noble Lord, when the Bill would be proceeded with, preliminary to a further discussion, and when the House might expect to have laid on the Table those papers referred to on a previous evening by the Chancellor of the Exchequer, and again that night by the noble Lord? The House was in possession of the letter of the right hon. Gentleman the Secretary for Ireland, and of the Treasury Minute of December last; but he (the Earl of Lincoln) understood that the Government was in possession of an immense mass of information which threw great light upon the existing condition of Ireland, and which on that account the House would desire to be fully acquainted with.

LORD J. RUSSELL: With respect to the first question, we propose now to separate the Act for facilitating the advance of money to landed proprietors; instead of having one Drainage Act, giving 2,000,000*l.* to Great Britain, and 1,000,000*l.* to Ireland, we propose to pass two separate Acts —one for Great Britain, somewhat enlarging the powers granted before, and another Act for Ireland, which I shall shortly move for leave to bring in; and though the sum to be advanced by that Act is to be limited to 1,000,000*l.*, yet I apprehend there will be no hesitation on the part of the Government [as we understood] to aid the owners of land in such undertakings as may conduce to useful ends. As to the Fever Act, I believe there was some practical difficulty in carrying it into operation. With respect to the third question which the noble Lord has asked, I do not know if I may precisely fix the day. The papers will be presented on Wednesday, and I think I can name Monday for the discussion of two of these Bills.

MR. LABOUCHERE would state the reason which had induced the Government to abolish the board appointed under the Fever Act, referred to by the noble Lord, and the unwillingness which was now felt to reconstitute that board. The noble Lord was aware that under the ordinary provisions of the poor law, fever hospitals, with the consent of the guardians, might be attached to workhouses, and that by an Act called the Contagious Diseases Act, every precaution was empowered to be taken in workhouses and elsewhere to provide against the spread of fever, and for the comfort and cure of fever patients. These Acts had rendered unnecessary the central board of health; and it had been found, in numerous instances and by multitudinous complaints forwarded from every part of the country, that this board was the occasion of so many abuses, at a useless expenditure of so much money, that it would have been inconsistent with the real prevention of disease to continue any longer that board in the exercise of its needless functions. It had been thought better to depend upon the ordinary law; so far there was no cause to call for additional powers; and he could assure the noble Lord, that the attention of the Government was anxiously directed to the subject. He would add, that though in some cases fever had accompanied a want of food, yet that Ireland was at this moment free from any fever arising from such circumstances. The accounts given to the contrary were, to a very great extent, undoubtedly inaccurate. Dysentery had been found to exist in various districts to a deplorable degree; but with this exception there was no fever or disease in the country so wide-spread and so alarming in its results as to ensue in loss of life.

Sir R. H. **INGLIS** had only to remember the short speeches of several Irish Members, and to look to the deserted state of the benches, to be convinced that it was the determination to adjourn the discussion; but he should be especially unworthy of a seat in that House did he allow such a speech as that delivered that night by the noble Lord to pass without the expression at least of his cordial approbation. It was a speech as remarkable for what had been stated as for what had been omitted; for, even with all the experience of the noble Lord in the art of driving, he had felt it necessary, it might be supposed, in dealing with Ireland as a subject, to take example by the fate of his predecessors, and to avoid those difficulties and obstructions over which they had attempted to drive their state waggons, and by which those waggons had been nearly, if not entirely, overturned. The noble Lord had, however, been sustained by his own sense of duty; he had conciliated, as he believed, the confidence of both sides of the House, and had succeeded in evading any apparent opposition from any quarter. Upon one point in the noble Lord's speech, he must, however, be permitted to express some doubt, and to question if this might not be reconsidered with advantage. The noble Lord sought to introduce a new system of land tenure into Ireland. The calculation was, that there were no less than 4,500,000 acres in Ireland remaining to be reclaimed; and these acres the noble lord proposed to divide into sections so inconsiderable, that, in the most purely politico-economical view, he was preparing to establish a pauperized population, and day by day to deteriorate agriculture. These sections were to consist of not more than twenty or fifty acres; and if this scheme were persevered in, he warned his noble Friend that he would raise up in Ireland that which had proved to be such a curse elsewhere—a population unprepared even to cultivate the soil. There would neither be capital nor science; agriculture would be neglected; and surely there was nothing in this result which could engage the approval of the noble Lord. They had only to glance at France, where this system prevailed so extensively, and where in consequence a gradual deterioration was taking place, to learn how many evils there were involved in and attendant on the measure suggested by the noble Lord. And when they were introducing a new system for the maintenance of the poor in Ireland, he would ask if it were not worthy of their consideration if they would not tax something more and something else than land?

Mr. G. A. **HAMILTON** said, that concurring with hon. Members who thought it was better not to discuss the measures of the noble Lord, which were numerous and extensive, till there was time for considering them attentively, he only rose for the purpose of asking two questions explanatory of the statement of the noble Lord. The first was this: He understood from the noble Lord that pending the passing of the Act for constituting relief committees, and authorizing them to give food, it was the intention of Government to take means for doing so? He hoped he was right in thus understanding the noble Lord, and that this relief in food would be given with the greatest promptitude. And the second question he had to ask was this: It was admitted on all hands that the tillage of the country was neglected, and that from this neglect there was serious apprehension of a scarcity next year. Now, although the poor people were blamed for neglecting the cultivation of the land, he believed that they could not help doing so. The small farmer of five acres, who depended entirely on the potato for his support, and had now lost it, was obliged of necessity to go to the public works, in order to earn money wages for his subsistence. The noble Lord had announced his intention of lending money to proprietors to improve their estates. He (Mr. Hamilton) believed there was no way in which a proprietor having small tenants of five or ten acres could apply the money more usefully for himself and for his tenantry, than by employing those poor people in tilling their lands. He wished, therefore, to ask whether the loans under the Treasury Minute would be applicable to this purpose?

The CHANCELLOR of the EXCHEQUER: With regard to the temporary relief in anticipation of the operation of the permanent legislation to be provided by the Government, the relief and local committee would administer funds derived from rates imposed by the board of guardians, the money subscribed by private benevolence, and also the funds advanced by Government. As to the application of the money advanced by Government to the cultivation of private estates, as suggested by the hon. Member, it was not proposed that proprietors should be enabled to borrow money from the State to carry on the ordinary cultivation of their land. The Million Act would enable them to borrow money which would be applicable to drainage purposes.

Viscount BERNARD inquired whether it was the intention of Government to bring in a Bill to enlarge the provisions of the Fisheries Act for Ireland, and whether it was the intention of Government to take any steps in consequence of the survey they had been making of Cork harbour. This last question he had been requested to ask by a large and most important meeting of the city of Cork.

Mr. GRATTAN could not sufficiently press upon the House the importance of immediate and energetic relief being extended to Ireland, which was, in some parts of it, enduring such appalling sufferings, that the dogs were tearing to pieces dead carcases in the fields, and the rats devouring them in the houses. And, while scenes like these were occurring in Ireland, what was the fact as regarded the supply of corn sent into that country? It appeared, from papers which had been laid on the Table of the House, that Great Britain had imported from foreign countries no less than 3,700,000 quarters of grain up to December last; that she had imported from Ireland 1,776,000 quarters of grain; and that, at the time when the Irish were dying of starvation, the English had imported into Ireland only 47,000 quarters of grain. And this occurred at a time when the country had a surplus of income over expenditure of 2,800,000*l.* The price of oatmeal in Ireland was 4*s.* 2*d.* a stone, while the wages of those who had employment did not exceed 8*d.* and 9*d.* a day. He did not mean to say that the people of Ireland had been sold to the merchants of London and Liverpool; but honest, fair dealing had not been shown towards them. If Government had sent a few thousand quarters of meal to the south parts of Ireland, great relief would thereby have been afforded to the people. In many places, even where the people were paid their wages, they had no depôt for provisions to which they could resort. The noble Lord in his speech went further than the proposal of remedial measures for the present,—he proposed permanent measures for the relief of Ireland. But, if the noble Lord meant to tax the landlords of Ireland, let him mete out a fair measure of justice to all, and let him tax the men who had abandoned their country. The noble Lord talked of properties and rights; but he held that if a man ran away from his property, and left people to starve, he ought to be compelled to contribute largely towards their support. He wished to know why such men as Earl Fitzwilliam, the Marquess of Headfort, and others, possessing large property in Ireland, some of them to the extent of 50,000*l.* a year, without residing in the country, should not be heavily taxed for the support of the poor of Ireland? In the time of one of the Stuarts, who were the very worst enemies of Ireland, a clause was introduced into all title-deeds to the effect, that if the owner did not reside in Ireland for six months in the year, he forfeited all his property. He hoped that, in establishing a permanent measure for Ireland, the noble Lord would not be afraid, but would act upon the broad principle of equal justice to all, and that a measure which would promote the happiness and prosperity of all classes of the people would be brought forward, and, in beneficial operation, before a war between this and any other country should arise. In the meantime, however, it was their first duty to save the people from the miseries of famine and starvation.

Sir W. VERNER wished to address a few words to the House on this important subject. He stood there, in every sense of the word, an independent Member, and was ready to give his vote upon every question solely with a regard to its own merits, and without the slightest consideration as to how it might affect the interests of any party. He was open to one bribe only—whoever did best for Ireland would win his gratitude—personally and politically. He sincerely hoped that whoever undertook the great task of saving Ireland would judge of the people of Ireland gently, whether landlords or tenants, and would not be led away by false representations in the reports of those who unjustly maligned them. He would just advert to one circumstance that had not been noticed in the course of the evening. In his opinion, the exertions on the part of the constituted authorities in Ireland had been greatly marred by the sanction and encouragement given to the people to supply themselves with arms. He could not be persuaded that this was purely an accidental thing; it was so extraordinary that a nation in a state of starvation should call for an importation of arms to such an extent that the manufacturers were unable to supply them. He had a letter from a person of great respectability in the county which he had the honour to represent (Armagh), which had been highly commended that evening by the noble Lord (Lord J. Russell), in which it was stated, that in one part of that county 1,000 stand of arms had been sold since the month of November last; and he added that in that same district not one shilling of rent had been paid. Another fact which he would lay before the House related to a tenant who had 2*l.* of rent returned to him by the agent upon the estate on which his farm was situated. The tenant, on leaving the office of the agent, was heard to say that the 2*l.* would buy him a fine gun; and, in point of fact, he believed that this man did lay out the money for the purchase of a blunderbuss, instead of appropriating it, as it was intended he should do, to the wants of his family. He was aware that it was alleged to be impossible to prevent private traders from disposing of arms; but he would suggest to the noble Lord that this was a subject which deserved the serious attention of the Government. He read in the newspapers, a few days ago, that between the 6th and 9th of the present month, 315 loads of oatmeal were imported into Liverpool from Ireland; and he thought it was a strong proof of the patient and pacific disposition of the Irish people, that they allowed flour and meal to be sent out of the country without making some effort to detain it. Before leaving home, he authorized his steward to purchase a stock of meal and flour, and he had to-day received a letter, in which his steward informed him that he could only get half a ton of each, and that the price which, when he left home, was 16*s.*, was now 23*s.* He hoped that nothing would be left undone by Her Majesty's Government and by the House to relieve the frightful distress which now existed in Ireland.

Mr. TUITE wished to make one observation with reference to a statement which had been made reflecting upon the landlords of Ireland. The noble Lord had stated that instances had occurred of farmers holding twenty, forty, or even sixty acres of land, being employed on the public works; and he also stated that the sons of such persons were in some cases receiving the relief money which was intended for the distressed poor. Now, he (Mr. Tuite) had attended very closely to the working of the relief committees in that part of Ireland in which he resided, and he was perfectly satisfied that such a circumstance as that alluded to by the noble Lord could not have taken place without the sanction of the relief committee of the district. He thought it was due to those relief committees who had done their duty, that persons who would sanction so gross a misappropriation of charitable funds as had been mentioned by the noble Lord, should be exposed; and that the names of the committees by whom such disgraceful proceedings were tolerated, should be printed and published. The circumstance referred to by the noble Lord could not have occurred unless the persons relieved had been approved of by the relief committees, and returned to the relief officers appointed by the Government as proper persons for employment on public works. He was strongly inclined to think that such an occurrence could only have taken place in a district which was suffering from the great curse of Ireland—absenteeism. It had been stated that public officers had been attacked and impeded in the discharge of their duties by mobs of the refractory poor who had not received payment for their work. Now he was aware that it was quite impossible for the Board of Works to attend to the immense business they had to transact with perfect regularity; but he must say, in defence of the people of Ireland, that, to his own knowledge, instances had occurred where delays of eight or ten days had taken place in the payment of the poor after their work had been performed; and when they considered that these persons were depending upon their daily hire for the purchase of food to save themselves and their families from starvation, he did not think it surprising that in some few instances a spirit of dissatisfaction and insubordination should have been manifested. He regretted that the further consideration of the measures proposed by Her Majesty's Government should have been deferred until Monday; for he thought that under the circumstances they deserved and ought to receive the immediate attention of the Legislature. He must express his wish that some day this week could be named for continuing the debate.

MR. HUME said, that with some exceptions the statement of the noble Lord had given great satisfaction. There were one or two points, however, on which he wished to throw out a few hints for the noble Lord's consideration. The noble Lord had, with great candour, stated the evils which had arisen from the interference of the Government agents in their attempts to employ the people; and he (Mr. Hume) thought sufficient had been said to justify the opinion that this system had done as much harm as good. That opinion was entertained by many persons, and he thought the noble Lord ought to be prepared to dispense with the system as speedily as possible. The noble Lord had stated that he would be prepared, on the part of the Government, to take charge of unreclaimed land. He (Mr. Hume) considered that any attempt by the Government to take up waste lands, with a view to their improvement, was one of the wildest schemes imaginable. He would candidly tell the noble Lord, that if he would bring forward immediately two of the measures which he proposed to render subsidiary measures, namely, plans to simplify the titles to property and to facilitate the sale of land, and to compel proprietors to maintain the poor on their estates, he would confer a far greater benefit upon the Irish people than by endeavouring to reclaim waste lands. The fact was, that wherever there was land worth cultivating, capital enough might without difficulty be found for its cultivation. Government never meddled with pecuniary matters in Ireland without losing a great deal of money; and the misfortune was not confined to this loss of money, for their interference prevented private individuals from embarking in schemes for the advantage of the country. He had to-day seen two gentlemen, land agents, from Ireland, who assured him that any amount of land might be sold in Ireland, provided the titles could be made out easily without expense. It was notorious that the present registry of land in Ireland was greatly in need of improvement, and he wished to see it placed on as efficient a footing as the registry of land in Scotland. He begged to suggest to the noble Lord the importance of reconsidering this question. The noble Lord must be aware that the money markets, both in England and on the Continent, were not in a condition to be trifled with; and if the Government had to procure 7,000,000, 8,000,000, or 9,000,000 of money for the improvement of land, they would be obliged to go into the money market to obtain it—a step which he would greatly regret to see them taking at the present time. He had been gratified to hear the observation of the hon. Member for Oxford (Sir R. Inglis), that there was a prospect now of the landlords of Ireland looking to the interests of people living on their estates, and that the land of Ireland would be made to maintain the poor residing upon it. The people of this country were now called upon to support the poor of Ireland, but they surely would not be called upon to support the gentry of Ireland. If the landed proprietors in Ireland had more property than they wanted, and had incurred debts they were unable to meet, let them act as any private individual would do—sell their property and discharge those debts. He had been informed that there was one individual in Ireland possessed of a surface of 300,000 acres, who did not derive from it an income of 1,000*l.* a year, and who would not sell one acre. Now he would call on such individuals to sell their property and discharge their incumbrances; and if this were done, he would not despair of regenerating Ireland. He hoped the noble Lord would persevere in the course he had now taken; for by acting with confidence upon sound principles, he might confer the most important benefits upon Ireland.

MR. STAFFORD O'BRIEN wished to put a question to the noble Lord on a point of extreme importance to Ireland, with reference to the contemporaneous jurisdiction of the relief committees and the boards of guardians. He wished to know whether it were the intention of the Government that these relief committees should cease to exist when the extended poor law came into operation, or whether it were intended that they should continue at the same time with the boards of guardians? And, if they did mean the relief committees to continue, what were to be the separate jurisdictions of those committees and the boards of guardians? He was connected with both those bodies in the county of Clare; he was a member of the board of guardians, and chairman of one of the relief committees. The duties those two bodies had to discharge were not precisely similar; but the duties of the officer of a relief committee were more nearly analogous to those of relieving officers than of members of a board of guardians in England. Having heard several charges made against Her Majesty's Government of apparent neglect and indifference to the sufferings of the Irish people, he could not sit down without expressing the very strong feeling he entertained, that however they might blame a Government for introducing a particular measure, yet when that measure had been passed with the tacit or expressed assent of the House, the Legislature were bound to share with the Government the responsibility of such a measure. He thought, therefore, that the charges brought against the Government for passing the Labour-rate Bill were very unfair, inasmuch as it had now become an Act of the Legislature; and he was quite willing, not as an Irish Member, but as one who had property in Ireland, to take his share of the blame of absenting himself from Parliament when that measure was adopted. He thought it would be very unfair in him—after having left town, and so in some measure abandoned his duty at the time the Bill was before Parliament—if he were now to turn round upon the Government and charge them with the whole culpability and responsibility of the measure. The noble Lord had wisely acquiesced in the suggestion to postpone the consideration of the measures which he had to-night submitted to the House; and he (Mr. A. S. O'Brien) would not enter into any discussion on the subject now. He desired, however, to record his firm conviction that what the noble Lord had said of the owners of land in Ireland was true in all its parts, and to all its extent; and as one of those landed proprietors, he (Mr. A. S. O'Brien) desired to recognise that they could no more be free from the penal consequences of the errors of those who had gone before them, than they could be wholly free from the legal engagements which were left binding upon them by their predecessors. He begged to proclaim his strong conviction that the utmost efforts of the Legislature, however wise and benevolent, must fail and be entirely frustrated, unless those who held land in Ireland were prepared to second and co-operate in those efforts with self-denial, energy, and exertion, which were not to be confined within common bounds, or stinted within the limits of ordinary duration. He must, in justice to the landlords of Ireland, remind the noble Lord that if he found, after the consolidation of the Drainage Acts, after the inducement he (Lord J. Russell) had held out to landlords, especially in Munster, to advance capital for improving their estates, that they were backward in requiring these advances, and feared to enter into these liabilities, it was because they must recognise the existence of an agrarian law in that province, which placed the landlords of Ireland (whether by their own fault or by that of their predecessors) in circumstances of extraordinary difficulty. All those who had anything to do with the tenure of land in Ireland, and the management of landed property there, must be well aware, that to come to a tenant and ask him to submit to an advance of rent for improvements in the property, was a very difficult question to put, and one likely to meet with only one answer. Though the extended poor law for Ireland might superinduce a recognition of just rights, and other measures might excite zeal for the promotion of agriculture, still they must be prepared to find a slow operation of those measures; and they must not too hastily judge the landlords of that part of Ireland with which he was more immediately connected, if they found a difficulty at first in obtaining those guarantees from their tenants which would alone justify their appealing for loans to the Government. The hon. Member for the county of Armagh (Sir H. Verner) had referred to the quantity of oatmeal which had been exported from Ireland to this country. Now, although his sentiments on the subject of protection were unchanged, yet he felt it was of the utmost importance that the trade should be perfectly, totally, and completely free between the counties of England, the towns of England, and the islands of this country, subjects, as they were, of one common Sovereign, and bound by one common law. He might mention, in connexion with this, a circumstance which had occurred within his own experience. The district in which he spent the latter part of the summer, and the early part of the autumn, was divided into two parts—one district was the rich alluvial soil of the river Shannon, and the other was the mountainous district which rose from those plains, and formed a great part of the county of Clare. He found the poor people in those districts where wheat would not grow entirely dependent upon oats; but it was well known that in that part of Ireland the yield of oats for oatmeal was uncommonly short this year, so that the poor people could not grind the oats they grew. The consequence was, that these poor people wished to take their oats to Limerick to sell them at the market there, and with the money obtained for them to purchase wheat exported from England for the support of themselves and their families. Now if a system restricting the importation of oats from Ireland into England had been established by the Government, the consequence would have been that these poor people would not have had sufficient subsistence for themselves and their families. The price of oats was at the time very good, and the interchange of commodities was mutually advantageous to both parties. He had felt it his duty to say thus much, and to express his entire concurrence in the general views laid down by the noble Lord, and in the necessity of what was now generally recognised, that the property of Ireland should support the poor of Ireland. The repeated calamities and misfortunes of Ireland proved that it was to the landlords of Ireland, and to every class of the people in Ireland, that that country could look for its social and political regeneration.

MR. ROEBUCK understood that it was the wish of the House that Members should not then enter into a discussion of the plan proposed by the noble Lord; he could not help, however, expressing—though not stating his entire concurrence in the views which the noble Lord had taken—if the noble Lord would permit so humble a person as he was to do so, his approbation of the tone and the manner in which the noble Lord's statement had been made, and the feeling that characterized the whole of his speech. He was anxious to express his unbounded admiration for the kindness and consideration which that speech manifested for the people of Ireland, and for that manliness which he thought ought to characterize every statesman who governed this empire. He gave his humble praise to the noble Lord; but he could not permit the world at large to think that the noble Lord would find it easy to carry out all parts of his elaborate scheme. The noble Lord had divided his scheme into three separate parts. One was for the immediate relief or alleviation of the great calamity which had fallen upon Ireland. That was a part which for the present he would not touch. The next portion of the plan had reference to the regeneration of the people of Ireland—to create such a desire and feeling among them, to place them in such a position as that they should not be subject to such calamities as the present, and which they had all seen to occur more than once. In the ends which the noble Lord had in view he concurred, as he believed they all concurred; but then he could not connect those ends with the theory which the noble Lord propounded to carry them into effect. It appeared to him that any scheme by which money was to be taken from the people of England for the purpose of fostering the condition of the Irish landlords, and of aiding them in the management of their estates, was a mischievous error. He had never seen money advanced for Ireland, however proposed to be advanced, that it was not given instead of being lent. ["No, no!"] Yes, he had seen many times money agreed to as loans; but he had not heard of its ever being repaid. He had seen loan advanced after loan—he had not seen any of them repaid. He recollected certain moneys being advanced under the name of "The Million Fund." He had not yet heard that it had been returned. Why, a grant was about to be made. Half only of the money proposed to be lent was to be got back. That was a part of their proceedings which he desired to guard himself from sanctioning on the present occasion. He agreed as to the necessity of their having a poor law in Ireland—an English poor law in Ireland. The noble Lord's plan was somewhat elaborated. Still he was not disposed to find fault, seeing what had been done—that, at last, the blow had been struck—that the land of Ireland was bound to maintain the poor of Ireland. Though there were parts of the noble Lord's plan to which he had great objection, still the scheme was one which, as a whole, he would be ashamed to oppose. Four-and twenty hours would not, however, pass away until objections were made to it; and he hoped, as they arose, that the noble Lord would exhibit that gallant bearing which he had already evinced; and if he did so, he might rely upon it that the people would support him, and he would find himself sustained in his effort to have the poor maintained. He did not think that the noble Lord would be able to mitigate the harshness of the remedy which he was applying to the Irish landlords; for, let the noble Lord do what he might, there would still be bitterness in the draught. ["No, no!"] He was unwilling to trespass on the attention of the House. He would not go further than to say that he believed that any attempt to make the measure agreeable to the Irish landlords, by taxing the people of England, might make it agreeable to the Irish landlords; but it would add to the noble Lord's difficulties, by raising objections in this country to the proposition of a good measure; that creating that difficulty in England would not lessen the opposition he would be sure to meet with from the landlords of Ireland. He begged the noble Lord would recollect that there was a large population—a considerable weight of public opinion—which must be considered by him, even when legislating for the landlords of Ireland.

The CHANCELLOR of the EXCHEQUER said, before answering the question of the hon. Gentleman opposite (Mr. Stafford O'Brien), he begged to express the pleasure with which he heard his speech. There was a tone and temper in that speech which commanded his full approbation. It was not the intention either of the noble Lord or of any Member of the Government to cast censure upon the Irish landlords. He could assure the House that the Government knew enough of Ireland to know that these landlords had many difficulties to encounter, and that if they had not hitherto done so much as Gentlemen on this side the water thought they might be able to accomplish, it was not altogether their fault. The hon. Gentleman had asked what were to be the distinct functions between the relief committees and the boards of guardians? In answer to that he would say, that it was not intended by these Bills in any way to affect or alter the functions of the boards of guardians. They would remain in each union; and they would have the power to levy the rates and to superintend the administration of the poor laws as at present. But it was also intended to form in each electoral district of the union a relief committee sanctioned by law. The guardians would be *ex officio* members of those committees, as well as the magistrates of the districts. The rates would then be levied by the board of guardians, and the rates required in each electoral district would be advanced from the funds of the union to each district. He wished further to say, in reference to what had fallen from a noble Lord opposite, that no fewer than twenty-six depôts for food had been established in the south and west of Ireland: and most of them had been in operation for the last four weeks. The one in Skibbereen, in particular, had been open the whole time during which the transactions the noble Lord alluded to had taken place. He had lately received a letter from a commissary on the spot, stating that not only were there considerable sales of food from private sources, but that the depôt established by the Government there had been the means of feeding 3,000 persons. With reference to what an hon. Gentleman behind him had said of the delay experienced in bringing in these Bills—as if relief were stopped till the measures were passed—he would state that the very reverse of this was the case; because all the time measures were in progress for the establishment of soup-kitchens, as well as for selling food at a cheap price; and by reports recently received from the counties of Cork, Clare, and Leitrim, it appeared that these depôts were becoming exceedingly popular, and, by the assistance of the Government, were now generally extending throughout the distressed districts. It was, therefore, not true that relief was stopped. He might add, that a steamer had been sent round the coast with a supply of boilers to facilitate the making of soup; and he would only state further, that since the announcement of the Government measures, the price of corn had already fallen in Dublin; and there could be no doubt that when the ports were opened all the corn now in bond—500,000 quarters—would be brought to market.

Lord JOHN RUSSELL: Perhaps I should say, in answer to the noble Lord (Viscount Clements), that the course I propose is to ask leave to bring in the Bills I have mentioned; and the Bill which renders valid the proceedings under Mr. Labouchere's letter will be immediately printed. I think it better not to ask the House for its opinion on that Bill until it is printed, and then I shall ask for the second reading. It will be printed by Wednesday; and if hon. Members wish for a general discussion, it can be taken on Monday. The other Bill will be hardly prepared in time to be in the hands of hon. Members before Thursday; and we shall be better prepared to enter into the discussion after seeing the Bill. Besides, there are very voluminous papers to be presented to the House either to-morrow or Wednesday. This is to be said likewise with respect to any immediate measures which have been pressed upon us, that the system of relief on public works is to be altered by another system we propose to establish, by committees of relief in electoral districts. That is a process which will take some time, and it will be carried out by the Government before the Bill has been passed through Parliament.

LORD G. BENTINCK: I concur, most willingly, in the praises that have been bestowed both on the tone and temper, and the beautiful language, that characterized the speech which my noble Friend has addressed to this House. With respect, however, to the measures themselves, which he has proposed, I do not intend to enter at any length into them. I certainly am not disposed to do so, unless it be to refer to the compulsory power of which my noble Friend spoke, as to the sale of waste lands in Ireland. But if I were to find fault now with those measures, it is, that, in my mind, they fall short of the necessity which the occasion demands. When the noble Lord spoke of 50,000*l.*, for supplying the want of seed in Ireland, I cannot but remark, that it is scarcely sufficient to sow five baronies in Ireland; about as much as would sow 25,000 acres of oats, or what might sow about 5,000 acres of potatoes. I am afraid, in the present state of matters in Ireland, that a grant of 50,000*l.* will be about like doing nothing at all. As to public works, I had hoped that my noble Friend would have brought forward measures by which the employment of English capital might be stimulated in Ireland. There is, for instance, one safe manner of employing capital, which must occur to every one — I mean the construction of railways. I had hoped that my noble Friend would have come forward with a well-digested scheme for establishing railways. I know of no other means by which, at so short a notice, so many persons might be brought into profitable employment; and I beg leave now to state, that it is with regard to the promotion of railways in Ireland that I am prepared to introduce a measure—one to which my noble Friend will give, I hope, that same careful consideration—the same calm consideration, which this House will be willing to give to all the measures of my noble Friend. I do not propose to introduce this measure in hostility with, or even as rivalling, those of my noble Friend; but I propose it only as an auxiliary to the measures of Her Majesty's Ministers, especially as it does not clash with those of which the noble Lord has given notice. The hon. and learned Member for Bath (Mr. Roebuck) has deprecated the idea of fostering the Irish landlords, in cultivating their estates, as a mischievous measure. Sir, I totally and entirely dissent from the hon. and learned Gentleman. I know of nothing that could be more advantageous than fostering Irish landlords to the very utmost in the cultivation of their estates. I saw, not long ago, a statement to the effect, that by the advance of 24,000*l.* by the Government to Lord De Freyne, he had been able to produce an absolute improvement in his estate of 3,000*l.* a year. I cannot conceive that England could do better than advance, not 24,000*l.*, but 24,000,000*l.* to Ireland, if we could thereby raise the incomes of the Irish landlords. It appears to me, that if we sought to put out our money at the most profitable interest, this would be the most profitable. Believing, as I do, that you cannot separate your interests from those of Ireland—that if there be any improvements in Ireland, such as there has been, and to so enormous an extent, as by the advance of 24,000*l.* to one landed proprietor—if there be a profit of 10 per cent upon such an advance, nothing could tend more to the improvement of Ireland at large than such advances. And, to me, the only matter of regret is, that we have not ten thousand Lord De Freynes to come and ask the Government for 24,000*l.* each. As to an alteration of the poor law in Ireland, I gather, from the reception which was given to the observations of my noble Friend, that the House will concur in his propositions. As regards emigration, I am not one of those who think that the way to strengthen the empire is to transport its best men to a foreign country. Who, Sir, are those who do emigrate? They are not the weak, the feeble, the inefficient, and the unenterprising: no; but it is the very bone and sinew of the country that are taken out of it. Instead of the country being thus made richer, it is rendered poorer — instead of being made more powerful, it is rendered weaker. You should look to other means to strengthen the industry, increase the wealth, and add to the prosperity, of the nation. I concur in thanking my noble Friend for what he has done; but I do not think he has gone far enough.

With respect to the facilities which my noble Friend has proposed as to the sale of estates, and the conversion of long leases into freeholds, I look to them with great satisfaction and great admiration. As, however, I said before, I regret that my noble Friend did not bring in a great measure for the promotion of railways in Ireland. As I am prepared with such a plan, I trust my noble Friend will give to it his full consideration.

Motion agreed to.

Bill brought in, and read a first time.

RAILWAYS IN IRELAND.

MR. W. R. COLLETT, who had a Motion on the Paper to the effect—

> " That it is the opinion of this House no public works can be of greater importance to the future prosperity of Ireland than Railways, and that every facility for their construction be given by Her Majesty's Government, provided always that proper security can be afforded for the repayment of any advances made by the Treasury ;"—

expressed his gratification at the announcement made by the noble Lord the Member for Lynn (Lord G. Bentinck), that the noble Lord had prepared a measure upon the subject. Much had been said relative to the importance and necessity of giving encouragement to the employment of English capital in Ireland; but he was not aware of a question to which each succeeding Government gave less attention than the questions of Irish railways and fisheries ; both of which, if properly encouraged, might be made sources of wealth and prosperity to that country. The Government first objected that they had a dislike to interfere with private enterprise ; but he was well aware that the directors and proprietary of Irish railways would be most happy if the Government would assist them in carrying out their works. Then a doubt was expressed as to whether the money would be properly expended ; but he could see no reason for such a doubt if the management were good. At last they came to the question of security : and the security which railway companies proposed to give was to make over the railways at once into the hands of the Government as a guarantee for any advances which might be made of the public money. Now the Government had not scrupled to spend in the course of three months upwards of half a million of money in unproductive labour—namely, the making of roads ; but they refused their assistance in promoting the construction of the most productive of public works, railways. In two instances only had assistance been given, and these were in the case of the Dublin and Kingstown and the Dublin and Drogheda railways, and the greatest advantages had been experienced in consequence. If the Government would render the Irish railway companies the necessary assistance, before forty-eight hours had expired upwards of 50,000 able-bodied men would be taken off the public works upon which they were now employed, and the Government would not be required to advance any money until the proprietaries had advanced 20 per cent on the outlay. The country, he was told, was to be improved by draining, and agriculture was to be fostered in every possible manner. But what was the use of drainage and such improvements if they had not the means of communication throughout the country ? How was the land to be permanently improved, except by the introduction of lime and other manures at a cheap rate ? And what cheaper means could they have for their conveyance than railways ? He might be taunted with being interested in the question, on account of his being a proprietor in Irish railways; but he begged to assure the House that he was not actuated by self-interested motives, and as a proof of his desire to promote the welfare of Ireland, he might state that he had resided in that country during the whole autumn, that he had bought all the corn he could, erected mills, and for the whole of that period had employed upwards of 500 men in his slate quarries. Not one of these men had died, except from natural causes ; not one had been in the poor house, and not a penny had been asked by any of them from the relief committees. He had said to them, " You may have your wages in money or in corn at cost price ;" and by these means 500 men, or, with their families, 2000 persons, had been supported ever since the works were begun. The companies promoting the main trunk lines of railway from Dublin to Cork and to Limerick, did not want a farthing from the Government; it was only in the construction of lines running through the distressed districts of the country that loans were required. He was quite convinced of this : but as the noble Lord (Lord G. Bentinck) had prepared a measure, he would, by leave of the House, for the present withdraw his Motion.

LORD J. RUSSELL said, that as he had stated in the early part of the evening, the question of advancing money for the construction of railroads in Ireland was still under the consideration of Government; but there were certain points still to be ascertained before they could come to a determination upon it.

Motion, by leave, withdrawn.

SUGAR IN BREWERIES—THE RUM DUTIES.

On the bringing up of the Report on the Customs and Excise,

MR. SMITH O'BRIEN rose, and said, he was desirous to obtain a pledge from the Government that they would give the distilling interest some time before proceeding with their measures for allowing the use of sugar in breweries and distilleries, and reducing the duty on rum. He had that morning received a letter which stated, that the distillers of Dublin regarded the Government measure with alarm, and were apprehensive that its effect would be utterly ruinous to them, and to every distiller in Ireland. The right hon. Gentleman stated, the other night, that he trusted a large quantity of corn, which was now used in breweries and distilleries, would be superseded by the use of sugar. In that desire he cordially concurred; and he would go so far as to say, that, in the present circumstances of the country, grain ought not to be used in distilleries at all, but that every possible facility should be given for the introduction of sugar and molasses, as a substitute, or any other article that might be available for conversion into spirits. The Chancellor of the Exchequer, however, had taken advantage of the feeling which existed upon the subject, and had accompanied this measure with another, which was, in point of fact, a measure of free trade, and which would have the effect of destroying the protection now enjoyed by the Irish distillers — a protection which, he confessed, at the same time, amounted nearly to prohibition. He was not prepared to say, that the existing protection was not too high — the duty levied on rum introduced into Ireland being 8*s.* 10*d.* per gallon— but it was now proposed that the duty should be at 3*s.* 2*d.*, so that the protection would be only 6*d.* per gallon; and at the same time the use of molasses was to be prohibited. All he wished to say further was, that it was not fair that one of the few remaining branches of manufacture in Ireland should be ruined by surprise; and he hoped to have a pledge from the right hon. Gentleman the Chancellor of the Exchequer that the parties should have a little time for the consideration of the measure.

CAPTAIN GORDON also urged upon the Government the propriety of not proceeding hastily with the measure.

The CHANCELLOR OF THE EXCHEQUER could not see that any delay would enable the House to discuss the measure with greater advantage than at present, though it might give parties an opportunity of raising an agitation upon the subject. No doubt the proposed measure would effect a considerable reduction in the amount of protection which the Scotch and Irish distillers at present enjoyed; but he had merely placed them in precisely the same relative position as the distillers in England; and thus, what the hon. Gentleman had so often asked for, equal law, would be established in each country.

An HON. MEMBER asked the Chancellor of the Exchequer, if it was his intention to lay upon the Table of the House the report of the experiments which had been made for the purpose of ascertaining the quantity of molasses which was equivalent to a quarter of malt?

The CHANCELLOR OF THE EXCHEQUER replied, that he had considered the subject, and, upon the whole, he did not think it would be advisable to do so; because the experiments were conducted upon a very small scale, by persons who had no very great experience in breweries and distilleries; and, as he did not rest his statement upon the results arrived at by those experiments, he thought that it would not be fair to lay them upon the Table.

Report agreed to.

House adjourned.

HOUSE OF LORDS,

Tuesday, January 26, 1847.

MINUTES.] PUBLIC BILLS.—*Received the Royal Assent.*—Corn Importation; Navigation.

HOUSE OF COMMONS,

Tuesday, January 26, 1846.

MINUTES.] PUBLIC BILLS.—1° Chelsea Pensioners; Factories.

2° Buck Wheat. &c. Importation.

PETITIONS PRESENTED. From Hyde, and several other places, for Limiting the Hours of Labour in Factories.—From Leeds, for Repeal or Amendment of Poor Removal Act.—From Shipowners of the Ports of Llanelly and Carmarthen, for carrying into effect the Recommendations of the Select Committee with regard to Lighthouses.—From Glasgow, for Abolition of Arrestment of Wages (Scotland).

CONVEYANCE OF CORN BY THE NAVY.

Sir C. NAPIER said, he understood that there were seven or eight sail of the line at Lisbon, and two in the Channel; and he wished to know whether there were any intention to take out the guns and marines, and to employ the vessels to import food into this country on merchants' account?

Mr. H. G. WARD remarked, that the question belonged to the Government in general, rather than to the department of the Admiralty in particular. No application had been made to the Admiralty for assistance of the kind; but the subject having been brought under the notice of Ministers on the general principle, it had been thought that if 3,000 or 4,000 tons of shipping were lent for the purpose, it would throw as many tons belonging to private individuals out of the market. It had, therefore, been decided that it was unadvisable to interfere.

TRANSPORTATION.

Mr. G. BANKES rose to put two questions to the Secretary for the Home Department. The first related to the circular issued from the Home Office last autumn, adressed to magistrates in quarter-sessions, respecting the relinquishment of punishment by transportation: in future it was stated to be the intention of Government to provide punishment at home. His first question was, whether the plan was matured, and if so, when it would be laid before the House?

Sir G. GREY said, the subject of suspending transportation as a punishment had undergone much deliberation; and he hoped in a few days to lay before the House papers showing what were the intentions of Ministers: they would convey to Members a knowledge of the principle but not of the details. The intention was to make all spare accommodation in prisons available; and it would be necessary to bring in a Bill on an early day.

JUVENILE OFFENDERS.

Mr. BANKES observed, that his second question related to juvenile offenders, and he was desirous of knowing whether Government had formed any plan for amending the mode of conducting proceedings against juvenile offenders, and for their treatment as well before as after conviction, in a manner more suitable to their age, and less hurtful to their morals?

Sir G. GREY had no definite plan to lay before the House on that subject. The disposal of juvenile offenders after conviction, would be included in the papers which, he hoped, would be in the hands of Members in a few days.

SUGAR IN DISTILLERIES.

Mr. MILES wished for some information on the proposed plan for allowing sugar and molasses to be used in breweries and distilleries. Would the right hon. Gentleman allow the Bill, for the purpose, to be read a second time, and then refer it to a Select Committee to sit upon it *de die in diem?* He apprehended that a Committee ought to sit on the equalization of the duties on rum. The precedent of the Bonded Corn Bill was analogous: the Select Committee upon it had sat only seven or eight days, and then made its report; the consequence was, that the arrangement was entirely satisfactory, and such might very likely be the issue in the present instance.

The CHANCELLOR of the EXCHEQUER did not think such a course would be expedient, and having conferred with the other Members of Government, he was enabled to state that such was their opinion. He was sure, however, that the hon. Member did not intend to interpose any delay; but when once the door of inquiry was opened, it was impossible to say when it could be closed. The question in the case of bonded corn was much narrower, yet the inquiry had been carried to a considerable length before the report was agreed to. The subject of the use of sugar in distilleries and breweries had been fully investigated in 1831, and since there had been no new experience, because the law had been unchanged: sugar and molasses during that period had not been allowed to be used. He had that morning communicated with the Chairman of the Board of Excise, and he (the Chancellor of the Exchequer) was prepared to make this proposal—that a reasonable time should be allowed, after the second reading, which would not, as he understood, be opposed; and he would undertake, on Thursday next, to lay upon the Table a full report of all the experience of the Board of Excise, both as applied to breweries and distilleries. The House would thus be in possession of all the information it could obtain, in order to enable it to arrive at a decision. As to the question regarding the duty on rum, he did not know what information there was that could bear upon the subject: the real point was, whether there could be any justification for putting the Irish and Scotch distiller on a more favourable footing than the English distillers? He thought not.

THE POOR (IRELAND).

Mr. P. SCROPE said, that one point only of the very able statement of the noble Lord last night was not quite clear: it respected the permanent system of increased relief to the poor of Ireland; and he wished to know distinctly whether any security would be introduced into the Bill that the relief might in all cases be effectually afforded?—whether, for example, a board of guardians, like that of Castlebar, would be able to refuse relief at discretion? Was a right of relief to be introduced in any practical way? A second question he wished to put was, whether the new law was intended to be accompanied by any act to prevent mendicancy and vagrancy in Ireland?

Lord J. RUSSELL answered, that according to the provisions of the Bill introduced last night, those paupers who were unable to work from age, from permanent infirmity, or bodily defect, would be entitled to relief from boards of guardians. For other classes of paupers, provision was made for particular cases. As to enforcing relief, supposing the guardians to refuse to carry the law into effect, he believed some further power would be required; and if that opinion were confirmed, it would be introduced into the Bill. On the subject of vagrancy, the hon. Member was aware that it was a very important one; and he (Lord J. Russell) thought that further legislation would be necessary, but no Bill for the purpose was now ready.

CHELSEA PENSIONS.

Mr. FOX MAULE rose to move for leave to bring in a Bill to abolish poundage now deducted from Chelsea pensioners. He observed, that it would not be necessary to occupy the attention of the House for more than a short time. What was called poundage, was paid by every man in Chelsea Hospital who was entitled to a reward for long service, wounds, or decrepitude: they had been deprived of it nearly one hundred years ago, and he was disposed to think that it was at that time just and equitable to deduct it. Previous to the year 1754, discharged soldiers had pensions allotted to them on the 1st of January, and no part of the money was paid to them until the 31st December following: the pensions were then paid annually and in arrear. The consequence was, that the pensioner constantly found at his elbow money-lenders ready to take advantage of him; but in 1754 Government thought it absolutely necessary, in justice to the pensioner, to check the practice, and a law was then passed, that thenceforward all payments of the kind should be made in advance: it was also made penal for any person to lend himself to the forestalling of a pension. In order to make up to the public the payment of this sum in advance, the pensioner was charged five per cent; and he was at that time very glad to submit to the deduction. This course was continued until 1833, and up to this moment five per cent was taken from nearly all the pensions to men belonging to Chelsea College, except in the cases of men enlisted since 1833. On looking into the matter, he also found that no deduction was made from pensions granted to the navy; and as it had been the practice to pay artillerymen through the Ordnance Department, and as the Act of 1754 had been overlooked, they too escaped the payment of poundage. Attention had been directed to the subject of this irregularity, and to the general injustice of poundage, last year, by his hon. Friend behind him (Captain Layard), and at his instance the subject was deliberately considered during the recess. The result had been that Ministers had determined to ask the House to sanction the abolition of poundage. They had arrived at this conclusion not only on account of the anomalous nature of the charge, but on account of the very inconvenient system it introduced with reference to the public service. The sum deducted might seem small to those who heard him, but it was by no means small to the veterans who were called upon to make the sacrifice. It was but an act of justice to the men that the old soldier should enjoy the whole sum awarded to him by his grateful country, and for these reasons he moved for leave to bring in the Bill.

Captain LAYARD should belie his feelings if he did not express his satisfaction and delight at the course Ministers had taken. These gallant and worn-out warriors had the highest claim, and it was fit that those claims should in every way be acknowledged, and to the fullest extent.

Sir DE LACY EVANS expressed his

acknowledgments to the Government for this act of justice. He much doubted whether the deduction was at all just in 1754, and he was quite certain that it was most unjust at present.

SIR H. DOUGLAS also stated his entire satisfaction at the proposed change.

Leave given. Bill brought in and read a first time.

FACTORIES.

MR. FIELDEN rose to move for leave to bring in a Bill to amend the laws relating to labour in factories, and spoke as follows: Sir, I propose to bring in a Bill with regard to the hours of labour in factories, similar, as regards persons between thirteen and eighteen years of age, in its provisions to one which the late Sir Robert Peel proposed to the House nearly thirty-two years ago—that is, I propose to limit the labour of young persons between the ages of thirteen and eighteen to twelve hours a day, allowing two hours out of the twelve for meals—that is, to ten hours actual work per day for five days in the week, and eight hours on Saturdays; and I propose to carry out this alteration by restricting the hours of actual labour to sixty-three hours in the week until the 1st of May, 1848; and after that period to fifty-eight hours in the week; and I propose, further, that the same restrictions shall apply to females above eighteen years of age. My reason for proposing this measure is, that the time of working young persons and females in factories is far too long, has been very mischievous, and, if persevered in, will become the cause of great national evils. I ask for it, also, because the people employed in factories have wished for it, and have long petitioned the Legislature to concede it to them; and because the ministers of religion, medical practitioners, and, indeed, all classes who have opportunities of observing the consequences of the present system, deprecate it as destructive of the moral and physical condition of a vast and most important class of the community. It is a question which involves the very existence of thousands who are, I am afraid, sacrificed annually for the want of those due and sufficient regulations without which the late Sir Robert Peel asserted that our improved machinery would become our bitterest curse. I will at once call the attention of the House to a document of authority on this subject, one which, I confess, startled me, though I have long been accustomed to fear the effects of the system we have been pursuing. I refer to "A Table of Deaths registered in 115 districts of England, during the quarter ending September 30, 1846"—that is, the autumn of the last year. In page 3 of this document, which is published by authority of the Registrar General of Births, Deaths, and Marriages, it is said, "The population of the extra-metropolitan district of Surrey was, in 1841, 187,868, and the population of the town sub-districts of Manchester was 163,856;" and that "in Manchester with this less population, the deaths registered in seven years—1838-44—were 39,992, and those in Surrey only 23,777, making a difference of 16,145." He then says—

> "The population of Surrey exceeded that of Manchester; yet, in seven years 16,000 persons died in Manchester over and above the deaths in Surrey; the mortality in which, from the poverty of the labourer and slighter degrees of the influences so fatal in Manchester, is higher than it should be. There were 23,523 children under five years of age in Surrey, and the deaths of children of that age were 7,364; the children in Manchester were 21,152, the deaths 20,726! In the seven years 13,362 children in Manchester alone fell a sacrifice to known causes, which it is believed may be removed to a great extent, and the victims in Liverpool were not less numerous. Other parts, and particularly the towns of England, are similarly afflicted."

In the same page follow these remarks:—

> "The returns of the past quarter prove that nothing effectual has been done to put a stop to the disease, suffering, and death in which so many thousands perish. The improvements, chiefly of a showy, superficial, outside character, have not reached the homes and habits of the people. The house and children of a labouring man can only be kept clean and healthy by the assiduous labour of a well-trained, industrious wife, as any one who has paid the least attention to the subject is aware. This is overlooked in Lancashire, where the woman is often engaged in labour from home. The consequence is that thousands, not only of the children, but of the men and women themselves, perished of the diseases formerly so fatal for the same reasons in barracks, camps, gaols, and ships."

In the same page an extract, given from a report of the registrar of Heaton Norris, Stockport, says—

> "Of the 121 persons, 53 were children of one year and under; and of these deaths of infants, the causes were certified by a medical attendant in only 28 cases. It is to be feared that many at this age are lost for want of medical assistance and care of the mother, who is soon obliged to leave her child in other hands, and go further to engage in constant and unwholesome toil. The child sickens, and is soothed by opiates."

In the same page, a quotation of a similar nature is given from the registrar of

Deansgate, Manchester, who concludes thus :—

> "In all Manchester there is but one children's dispensary, and this has but two medical officers. Such institutions should be numerous in large towns, and much good might be effected; but the unfortunate out-door occupation of the women, by causing the withholding of nature's nutriment from the children is terribly destructive of the latter."

In page 4, the Registrar General sums up this appalling picture by stating that—

> "In Manchester 13,362 children perished in seven years over and above the mortality natural to mankind. These 'little children,' brought up in unclean dwellings and impure streets, were left alone long days by their mothers to breathe the subtle sickly vapours, soothed by opium—a more 'cursed' distillation than 'hebenon'—and when assailed by mortal diseases, their stomachs torn, their bodies convulsed, their brains bewildered, left to die without medical aid, which, like hope, should 'come to all,' the skilled medical man never being called in at all, or only summoned to witness the death and sanction the funeral."

Sir, I cannot quote these official reports without recalling to the attention of the House, that for many, many years, statements of a similar nature, though perhaps not so shocking in degree, have been brought before it by the late Mr. Sadler, by Mr. Oastler, and, more recently, by Lord Ashley; but always so strenuously denied by the manufacturing body that the Parliament had remained incredulous. You are now told, from authority, and in figures not to be disputed, how awful is the destruction of human life in our principal manufacturing towns; you are told distinctly that one of its chief causes is the "constant and unwholesome toil" of mothers, who are compelled to leave their offspring "long days alone to breathe sickly vapours soothed by opiates," "withholding nature's nutriment," to their destruction. I agree, Sir, with the Registrar General, that the "house and children of a labouring man can only be kept clean and healthy by the assiduous labour of a well-trained industrious wife." I agree with him, also, in his just but severe remark, that "this is overlooked in Lancashire, where the woman is often engaged in labour from home." Agreeing with him, and knowing well the truth of his remarks, I have framed this Bill, with the hope that this House will no longer overlook the fruitful cause of such wide-spread death as the Registrar General has recorded; but that it will sanction at once the restriction which I propose with regard to females, in order to stop this frightful state of things. I hear men talk very glibly of the "horrors of war;" and I believe there is in this country a "Peace-preservation Society," whose object is to show mankind that nations, to avoid such horrors, should always remain at peace. I applaud their efforts; but let me ask what are the "horrors of war," but a wholesale sacrifice of human life now and then occurring? They are "horrors," and I respect those who bestow the energy of their minds in endeavours to convince the world of their futility and wickedness; but when the Registrar General, in the document I have quoted, notifies to us the horrible sacrifice of human life that is annually perpetrated in our manufacturing towns, far exceeding the average sacrifice of life by war, I think we should give an earnest of our sincere desire to avoid such horrors by immediately setting to work, in every practical form, to effect the object at home. As to the young persons between thirteen and eighteen, whom I call children, no one, I should think, can, in the abstract, object to their labour being curtailed to ten hours per day. It is the most critical period of life; it was well ascertained that they have not now the opportunities of healthful recreation and of moral instruction that they absolutely require, and that their physical powers are, in many cases, destroyed. The only argument that I anticipate against it is "the tyrant's plea," the plea of necessity. I expect to hear that to reduce the hours of work of the child to such as is compatible with his strength and his necessary moral training, will indirectly curtail the hours of labour of the adult workman with whom the child performs his labour; that this is a legislative interference between master and man; and it is contrary to the principles of political economy. I understand the words "political economy" to mean the mode of rightly governing a State; and my opponents have always asserted that any interference, by legislative enactment, between master and man, is a violation of the proper mode of governing. Let them recollect that they have all, whether as ministers or manufacturers, defined the labourer and the master to be two dealers—the first a man who sells the commodity called "labour," and the other, a man who buys that same commodity. They have defined them to be two dealers in one commodity. I ask my opponents to take their own definition, and tell me why it is contrary to the principles of political economy to interfere between these two dealers in the commodity called labour, any more than between any other dealers? If they show that it is contrary to the principles of political economy to interfere between two adult dealers in labour, then they will show that the same principle prevails when the dealings between those two persons involves the sacrifice of helpless children of both sexes. For my part, Sir, I think that a leading principle of political economy is, the care of the lives, the health, and the morals of the people; and it is upon the ground that the life, health, and morality of the young persons, and of women, are sacrificed by too long hours work in our factories, that I ask leave to bring in this Bill. I must remind the House that, in 1833, it passed an Act for emancipating the black slaves of our West Indian colonies, in which a clause was inserted restricting the labour of the emancipated adult negro to forty-five hours in a week—a shorter period by thirteen hours than the English factory child claims at our hands, many of whom have to work in rooms of as high a temperature as that of the colonies. Sir, I wish to assure the House that the working people are now as anxious as ever for the abridgment of labour that this Bill would enact. I remember a remarkable saying, put forward by the hon. Member for Stockport (Mr. Cobden), in the factory debate on the 22nd of May last, and reported thus:—

> "If this measure were staved off for but one twelvemonth, he was assured that the admissions that had been made upon this subject would change the views of the working classes, and, instead of seeking for a law to compel short hours for their labour, they would see the superior advantages of leaving the question to be settled by the mutual arrangement of master and man, under such circumstances as would not cause a diminution of the wages."

Now, more than two-thirds of the twelvemonths have passed away, and I have gained much instruction on the feelings of the working people in factories in that time. I have attended all their meetings that I could with convenience, and I have carefully watched the reported proceedings of others; and I can safely say that not one word of this prophecy has been fulfilled, but just the contrary. The factory hands are more determined than ever to have a Ten Hours Bill. They have entreated the masters to shorten the hours of work voluntarily, and sustain wages. My hon. Friend the Member for Ashton (Mr. Hindley) has been assisting them, but their efforts have failed, and now some are working twelve hours, some eight hours, some six hours, some a less number, and some mills are altogether closed. Nothing like ten hours a day, on an average, are now being worked in the factories of Lancashire and Yorkshire, and yet there is no "mutual arrangement of masters and men" in regard to working their mills an uniform number of hours. While some children are being overworked, others have no work at all, and have to starve for want of the necessaries of life. If the Ten Hours Bill had passed last Session, I believe that much of the suffering now going on, and to be expected, would have been avoided, and the hands at the factories would have been working ten hours a day. Short time, such as now prevails, disturbs all things; puts workpeople on less wages, and manufacturers take advantage of the state of things to reduce wages, which do not rise again so readily as they fall. But the evil does not stop here. As regards the spinners and manufacturers themselves, the weaker and poorer manufacturers suffer by it the most. Of necessity they sell their goods as they are produced, and almost invariably at a loss in seasons of bad trade. The wealthier lay up stocks of goods in those times of depression, if materials and labour are low, and when the demand revives, and prices of materials and wages rise, they bring their stocks into the market, undersell their poorer competitors, and prevent them from recovering their losses for a longer time than would otherwise be the case, and an increase of insolvencies and bankruptcies follow, all of which would have been prevented by proper regulation. When the employers are ruined, their workpeople are thrown out of work, and have to suffer the evils of excessive poverty. What justification can be urged for working young children and women to death in factories, to promote a system which tends to so much suffering both amongst employers and the employed? In conclusion I beg to state, that it is a ten and not an eleven hours Bill that those employed in factories supplicate this House to grant. An eleven hours bill would not remedy the evils complained of; it would not give satisfaction, nor stop the agitation on this question; and, as I know from long experience that what they seek is reasonable and ought to be conceded, I implore the House to pass a Ten Hours Bill.

SIR GEORGE GREY remarked that the Bill which the hon. Gentleman had just introduced was similar to that which had been introduced last Session, with the exception of slightly varying in form from that Bill. The first clause proposed to abridge the hours of labour in the case of young persons only, in which class are ranked all from thirteen to eighteen years of age, from twelve to eleven hours. The second clause proposed, after a given time, further to reduce the hours of labour to ten hours a day; and the third clause proposed that these two restrictions in reference to young persons should be extended to the case of female labourers. He hoped that there would be no discussion upon the Bill upon the present occasion, as the House would undoubtedly consent to the introduction of the Bill, reserving all discussion upon it until it was brought up for a second reading. He deemed it proper, however, on the present occasion, to guard himself against being supposed to acquiesce in the construction put upon, or rather upon the inference drawn from, the last report of the Registrar General—a very remarkable document, and one very well worthy the attention of the House. The hon. Gentleman seemed to infer that a strong proof was afforded in that document of an increased mortality amongst those who were engaged in factory labour, as compared with the population of the rural districts. So far as he recollected, his impression of that document was, that it afforded evidence of an increased mortality in crowded cities, where population had rapidly increased, as compared with the rural population. He believed that the hon. Gentleman would find that the mortality was greater, in proportion to its population, in Liverpool than it was in Manchester. The document referred to was well worthy the attention of the House, with reference to the necessity which existed for stringent sanatory regulations, particularly in the case of large towns. He would not at present enter further into the question, but would give his consent to the introduction of the Bill.

MR. TRELAWNY opposed the introduction of the Bill. He said he admitted the evil which existed, still he thought it right to protest against a measure which would militate so much against the interests of commerce without being advantageous to any class. If they legislated for those employed in factories, they should also take into consideration the hundred thousand female servants in London, who were most severely used by their masters and mistresses. An hon. Member beside him said they had not petitioned; but he considered it was the duty of that House to remedy a grievance whether it was petitioned against or not. He thought that the adoption of the present measure would tend to a reduction of the rate of wages; persons employed in factories would be thrown out of employment, and thereby increase the amount of competition in the other branches of labour. In his opinion the principles of non-interference were those which should be adopted by the State, and the adoption of any other principle would lead only to great harm and inextricable confusion. And it lay on the supporters of the measure to make out an exception from this great principle of political economy. This, he conceived, they had not, however, done, and it was safer to abide by these principles. He should divide the House on the subject.

MR. FERRAND did not wish to enter into the discussion of the subject. He rose merely to remark, that the object of the hon. Member who had just addressed the House, seemed to be to show that the Legislature had no right to interfere with him in walloping his own ass. He begged to remind that hon. Member, however, that the Legislature had passed a Bill for the protection of animals; and he (Mr. Ferrand) did not see, when they prevented harshness and cruelty to animals, upon what ground the poor factory workers should not have the same protection extended to them. It was said two or three Sessions ago, by an hon. Member who was now in the Cabinet, that there was no strike among the operatives in favour of the Ten Hours Bill. The fact was, that the workmen were anxious to obtain protection, if possible, without a strike. They came to that House year after year asking them to grant protection to their wives and daughters; and he thought, with the First Minister of the Crown, that that protection ought to be given. Nay, more, he thought that it would be a disgrace to the world to allow the present system to continue any longer; and he was glad that the hon. Member for Oldham had brought the question again before the House. He was delighted also to hear that it was probable that the Bill which his hon. Friend introduced, would receive some support from Her Majesty's Government; at least, so he understood from a speech that had been made by the Secretary of the Admiralty to his constituents at Sheffield. If this were the case, the noble Lord (Lord J. Russell) would excite a feeling of gratitude in the manufacturing districts, which would not be forgotten during the lives of the present generation of factory workers. He implored the House, on bended knees, to carry this Bill. If, however, they should refuse to grant the protection which was asked to the women and children of the factory districts—if they said they would not legislate for the happiness and comfort of their homes, they might depend upon it that ere long a spirit would be aroused in the north of England, which would convince them that it was a foolish assertion on the part of the Chancellor of the Exchequer, who had taunted them that they were not striking on the subject, and, therefore, there was no use in acceding to the claims which were urged on their behalf before the House. He trusted that no Member would be found to second the Motion of the hon. Member who had last addressed the House; and that, at least, they would show they had sufficient sympathy with the claims of the poor, to allow the Motion of the hon. Member for Oldham to pass without a division.

Sir G. STRICKLAND expressed his satisfaction that the hon. Member for Oldham had brought forward this measure at so early a period of the Session, so as to give them the fullest opportunity of calmly and fairly considering a question of so much importance to the working classes of this country. For himself, he must say that he considered the Ten Hours Bill a just measure. The only arguments he had heard against the interference of the Legislature upon this most important subject, were those which were usually urged by those who emphatically called themselves political economists. Now, he thought that, rightly understood, political economy afforded the rules of sound reasoning for the government of legislation; but there was a certain sort of political economists who never listened to reason on this subject, and who carried their argument to an extreme that did not apply to the question now under discussion. The argument of the hon. Member for Tavistock, for instance, just amounted to this: he said, "Don't interfere with the labour of the young people working in the factories, because if you do, why don't you also legislate for the female servants throughout the city of London?" The hon. Member did not seem to see that the two cases were utterly dissimilar. The Legislature was called upon to interfere on behalf of young persons who could not protect themselves, according to the rules of political economy. They were not called upon to interfere with female servants, because they were all supposed to be persons who were able to make a bargain with their masters; whereas most of the persons to whom this Bill applied were unable to make a bargain for themselves—the power of capital was so overwhelming — and they, therefore, asked that House, as a matter of humanity, to assist them in their difficulty. He most cordially seconded the Motion of the hon. Member for Oldham; and he thought the House was much indebted to him for the calm and temperate manner in which he had stated his case.

Sir R. PEEL: Sir, I regret that the hon. Member for Tavistock has intimated his intention of resisting the first reading of this Bill. I retain the opinions which I have held heretofore on this question. I retain those opinions, not because I am indifferent to the interests of those who are employed in factory labour, but because I entertain a sincere and conscientious conviction that we are not promoting their permanent interest by interfering in the manner they would wish us; and yet it is, as I think, perfectly consistent with the maintenance of those opinions that I should express regret at the present opposition of the hon. Member. In discussions of this kind, feeling enters as well as reason. To reject the Bill at this stage, would not be respectful to that great class of society whose welfare it is our duty to attend to. I thought there was a general impression at the commencement of this discussion, that leave would be given to bring in this Bill; that, in short, the same course would be followed this year as was followed the last year; that we should wait until after having seen the Bill, when we could apply ourselves to its discussion in a way in which the merits of the question could be entered into more fully than we can possibly do now. The right hon. Gentleman the Secretary of State, on the part of Her Majesty's Government, abstained from entering into the discussion, in the expectation that leave would be given to bring in the Bill. That was my own impression; and I think that, if ultimately the House should come to a decision on it adverse to the wishes of the parties, it would still be most desirable that that opinion should be taken after due consideration of the matter, and in a manner which would conciliate their feelings. I am, therefore, although entertaining the opinions I expressed last year, not prepared to take the course recommended by the hon. Gentleman, in imperatively refusing an opportunity of considering the matter more fully than it is possible it can be just now.

MR. HUME would only add, to what had been said by the right hon. Baronet, that to act in the way recommended by the hon. Member for Tavistock, would not be doing justice to his own principles, because what he, as one of the supporters of the same views as the hon. Member, asked for was, that the subject should receive the fullest investigation. He held the opinion, which he had formed after the most mature consideration of the question, that masters and labourers should be at liberty to make what agreements they thought fit with respect both to hours and to wages. It was upon this principle that the House had swept away seventy or eighty Bills which had interfered with labour. He asked the House, then, to allow the subject to be fully discussed. He was perfectly satisfied that out of the discussion they would receive a great deal of information, even from those who conscientiously believed that the Bill would do good. In his opinion, it would do great injury even to the parties who were seeking it. He had received a great number of communications from different persons, all wishing that the subject should have the fairest and fullest discussion, and he hoped it would not be refused.

MR. B. ESCOTT heartily agreed in the suggestions which had been made by the right hon. Gentleman; but there was a statement which had been made by the hon. Member for Knaresborough, and not denied on the Ministerial side of the House, upon which he (Mr. Escott) wished to have a distinct understanding. He wished to know whether the hon. Member for Knaresborough had rightly interpreted the intention of Government to support the Bill, or whether the Government intended at some future stage to exert themselves in opposition to it, or whether, as was perhaps the more probable case, it was not to be made a Government question at all? He was aware that some Members of the Government had expressed an opinion in favour of a measure of this kind, and others of them against it; and he presumed, therefore, that it would be made an open question, on which the Members of Government would take that side which each deemed most essential to the public interest. He felt quite sure that he would receive a distinct answer to the question he now put, as it would be satisfactory to the great interests concerned to know the decision of Government on this subject.

MR. TRELAWNY begged to withdraw his opposition to the first reading, in deference to the opinion of the House.

MR. ESCOTT, having received no answer to his question, begged to repeat it. [*Cries of* "Order, order!"] I am not aware that I am out of order in putting a question to the noble Lord at the head of the Government. [*Renewed cries of* "Order!"] I appeal to you, Sir, if I am out of order?

MR. SPEAKER: You are out of order in speaking twice.

MR. ESCOTT: I hope, Sir, without meaning any discourtesy to you, I may be allowed to repeat the question which I put a little while ago, as to the future intentions of Government with respect to their support or opposition to this Bill?

LORD J. RUSSELL: I may just say that it seems agreed on all hands that the Bill should be read a first time without opposition; when we come to a future stage, I shall be prepared to state what course the Government will take.

Leave given. Bill brought in and read a first time.

THE NATIONAL GALLERY.

MR. HUME moved an Address to Her Majesty—

"For a Copy of the Minutes of the Trustees of the National Gallery during the years 1845 and 1846, with the names of all the Trustees present at each Meeting: Also for Copies of the Orders and Instructions to the Keeper of the Gallery respecting the Cleaning of the Pictures, and any directions in respect to their arrangement; and of any other Documents relating thereto."

SIR R. PEEL begged leave to second the Motion. The trustees had no other object than to give the fullest information to the House of Commons, who had always behaved so liberally and generously to them. He thought the hon. Member had pursued a proper course in refraining from comments until he was in possession of the papers. The Motion, he believed, was for a copy of the minutes for the last two years. As he had already said, there could, of course, be no objection on the part of the trustees to supply the fullest information. There had been a meeting of the trustees the other day, and in consequence of the observations which had been made elsewhere, they had called upon the gentleman under whose immediate charge the institution was placed, to make the fullest report to them on the subject; and he hoped, in consideration of that gentleman's high character, his great eminence as an artist, and his consummate knowledge of that art of which he was so distinguished an ornament, hon. Members would suspend their judgment for a short time, until that report and the other documents were laid before the House, which he hoped would be in a few days.

The CHANCELLOR OF THE EXCHEQUER entirely concurred in what had been stated by the right hon. Baronet opposite. He assured the House that the fullest information would be laid before them.

Motion agreed to.

LAW OF SETTLEMENT.

SIR G. GREY moved that the following Gentlemen be appointed as the Select Committee on the Law of Settlement: Mr. C. Buller, Sir J. Graham, Mr. Bankes, Mr. J. E. Denison, Sir G. Grey, Mr. Hindley, Mr. T. Duncombe, Lord H. Vane, Mr. P. Scrope, Mr. W. Miles, Mr. C. Villiers, Mr. Borthwick, Mr. C. Round, Mr. Aldam, and Mr. Bodkin.

MR. FERRAND objected to this list, as not being a fair representation of the sentiments of the House. He found that out of fifteen names, it contained nine of Gentlemen of Liberal opinions, and only six of Conservatives, or Tories, or some other name; for he really did not know what the Gentlemen attached to the late First Lord of the Treasury called themselves. If he only knew what were their principles, he would know better what to call them. But, at all events, he did not think it was fair to have so large a majority of persons holding one class of opinions. There was another fatal objection to the list. It contained the name of Mr. Hindley in place of Mr. Henley, and he considered that the right hon. Gentleman could not proceed with it without giving a fresh notice.

MR. SPEAKER said, it was competent to agree to all the names, except that of Mr. Henley.

MR. FERRAND said, that if the right hon. Gentleman insisted upon adhering to this Committee, he had nothing more to say; but he must protest against it as being an unfair selection.

SIR G. GREY remarked, that he had taken pains, as he thought, to make as near as possible a fair representation of the feelings of the House. The proportions were not exactly as the hon. Member had stated. There were seven Members from one side of the House, and eight from the other; and in selecting them he had been anxious to have Gentlemen from different parts of the country, so as to include as fair a representation as possible of the large towns and the counties. Not being able to suggest any amendment in the composition of the Committee, he must persist in proposing the list of names as it stood upon the Paper, with the omission of the name of Mr. Hindley.

Motion agreed to.

House adjourned at half-past Six o'clock.

HOUSE OF LORDS,

Thursday, January 28, 1847.

MINUTES.] PETITIONS PRESENTED. From Guardians of the Poor of the Hundreds of Lodden and Clavering, and from East Looe, for Alteration of the Law of Settlement.—From the Poor Relief Committee of the City of Cork, for the Encouragement of the Importation of Corn.—From Mayor, Aldermen, and Burgesses of Cork, for Repeal of the Union with England.

POSTAGE CONVENTIONS.

The EARL of CLARENDON laid upon the Table papers relating to the postage convention between Great Britain and Prussia, and additional articles relating to the postage convention between this country and France, and also copies of Treasury warrants relating to postage arrangements between this country and Denmark and Prussia.

LORD BROUGHAM, with reference to the subject of the papers laid on the Table, would call the attention of their Lordships to the mode in which the postage was regulated with some of those countries with which we had entered into conventions for the arrangement of postage. It was not now necessary to previously pay the postage of letters to France or Belgium, nor was it necessary to previously pay the postage of letters from those countries to this; and one result which he found to arise from that arrangement was, that he received every morning a large packet of letters from France without any previous payment, which he considered to be a great hardship in some cases. Those of their Lordships who might not have necessarily so much communication with France as he had, could not feel it equally; but he assured them that he felt it severely. Within the last four or five days he had received four or five letters which were superscribed in characters that looked like the handwriting of friends; but some of them were merely circulars describing goods which persons had for sale. He could not have discovered that fact until he had opened the letters, and the only revenge he could obtain was, to send them back directed to the parties who had forwarded them.

The EARL of CLARENDON: I paid 1*s.* 4*d.* this morning for a printed account of a styptic.

DISTRESS IN IRELAND.

LORD BROUGHAM said, that it was very desirable that their Lordships should be furnished as soon as possible with a copy of the Bill for the further provision for the relief of the poor in Ireland. He had been obliged to leave the House before the conclusion of the debate on Monday night, and his noble Friend opposite (Earl Fitzwilliam), in alluding to that circumstance, said that he had gone off like gun-cotton, and left no residuum. He should be sorry to say anything unnecessarily to interfere with the simile of his noble Friend; but a simile should always convey a likeness, and in the simile of his noble Friend there was no likeness, inasmuch as his whole speech was founded on the residue which he had left behind him: for his noble Friend had chiefly dwelt on what he had said, and praised him for his suggestions respecting pastry, and for recommending economy in the use of flour. With respect to the poor law, he (Lord Brougham) was daily receiving communications from the country, and from parties friendly to the poor law, but wishing it to be amended, stating their anxiety that the matter should be calmly and deliberately discussed as soon as possible. They were on the eve of a dissolution of Parliament; and he feared the discussion would not be so calm as if it were taken at an early period of the Session. His noble Friend had stated that his (Lord Brougham's) speech had been *de omnibus rebus et quibusdam aliis;* but that would apply more correctly to the multifarious speech of his noble Friend himself. With respect to the state of the Irish poor, it was desirable that their Lordships should be furnished with the fullest information, and he was able to state that, from additional information which he had recently received, there were in Liverpool at present between 25,000 and 26,000 persons receiving relief at the soup kitchen, out of which number more than 22,000 were destitute Irish persons. He would not say much upon the subject of soup kitchens on that occasion, but would merely allude to the circumstance as a proof of the extent of the distress, and state a fact which he had been informed of in connexion with the management of the Liverpool soup kitchen. It appeared that certain persons of exalted station in Liverpool, had, from religious feelings on the subject of the observance of the Sabbath, chosen to prevent the opening of the soup kitchen on Sundays, and thus to deprive 25,000 persons of relief on that day, forgetting the example of the Redeemer, when the apostles were rebuked for plucking ears of wheat on their Sabbath; and that circumstance called forth the beautiful passage in the Scriptures in which the Saviour asked if a man's ox or his ass fell into a pit on the Sabbath, would he not relieve him on that day? He (Lord Brougham) dared to say that those misguided people, those zealots, who objected to the use of the soup kitchen on the Sabbath, had eaten comfortable dinners that day, and had allowed their servants to cook them. This mixing up religious fanaticism with the cause of charity and benevolence, was one of the greatest curses that could be experienced. An individual connected with agitation had been reported to have said that the money raised in this country for the relief of the destitute in Ireland, was to be used for the purpose of making converts from the Catholic religion whilst the people were suffering. That individual had denied the truth of the statement; but he (Lord Brougham) would earnestly direct the attention of their Lordships to the opinions which two individuals he should name held in reference to it. There was a clergyman, the Rev. Mr. Bickersteth, advocating a subscription of 20,000*l.* to raise a fund for sending missionaries to Ireland, alleging that they should strike while the iron was hot, and that the present period of suffering in Ireland was a favourable moment for converting the Catholics to Protestantism. This was as bad a thing, nay, it was one of the most wicked things, one of the most diabolical devices for sowing dissension where only charity should prevail, that he had ever heard of. Then they had a banker of the city of London, Mr. H. Hoare, writing a letter to his friend Lord R. Grosvenor, in which he asserted that the present calamity in Ireland was a dispensation of Divine Providence for the part the Legislature had taken in reference to the Maynooth grant. Mr. Hoare had put his name to that letter, to that detestable letter, and had printed it. Now, Mr. Hoare would not pretend to be a more pious man than Mr. Addison, and he in one of his best papers in the *Spectator* chided and reproved those persons who were always finding out things to be judgments. The presumption of a man sitting in his morning gown, dealing out judgments upon fellow-mortals as weak and fallible as himself, and daring to scan the inscrutable ways of Divine Providence! Because the Parliament had agreed to certain measures in 1844 with reference to Maynooth, these persons argued that in 1845, 1846, and 1847, there came a famine in Ireland.

The **EARL of CLARENDON**: And in the Highlands of Scotland.

LORD BROUGHAM: Yes, and in the Highlands of Scotland also, where the people had strenuously opposed the increased grant to Maynooth. A friend of his had written a book to show that the battle of Friedland had been won by the French against Russia in consequence of their not opposing the slave trade with sufficient vigour. He (Lord Brougham) observed to his friend that the Russians, who lost the battle, had no colonies, whilst the French, who won it, had West Indian colonies, so that he did not see how his friend could attritute the loss of that battle to the slave trade; and his friend replied that he should not scrutinize the ways of Providence; but he answered that he was not inclined to scrutinize those ways, and that in fact his friend had written a book for the purpose of scrutinizing them. And were these miserable reasoners, who talked of judgments, to frighten their fellow-creatures from works of charity and mercy! He protested against mixing up sectarian prejudice and fanatical feelings in such a manner. If these persons protested against giving charity on Sundays, that was the true way of making the Sabbath unpopular and odious, instead of making it beloved, as it ought to be.

EARL FITZWILLIAM said, it was desirable that they should have the information with respect to the destitute poor in an official form as soon as possible. With regard to the judgment of Providence, which it was said was apparent in the distress that prevailed in Ireland, he would ask who were the criminals? Why a Parliament principally Protestant. And they, who were the real criminals, had been exempted from the evils which fell on others.

House adjourned.

HOUSE OF COMMONS,

Thursday, January 28, 1847.

MINUTES.] NEW MEMBER SWORN.—For Salisbury, William James Chaplin, Esq.

PUBLIC BILLS.—1° Distilling from Sugar; Customs' Duties; Destitute Persons (Ireland).

2° Brewing from Sugar.

PETITIONS PRESENTED. From East Looe, and other places, for Repeal or Amendment of Poor Removal Act.—From Kinsale, for Amendment of Poor Law (Ireland) Bill.—From the Legislative Council of New South Wales, for the Adoption of Measures for the Relief of the Sufferers by the Defalcation of Mr. Manning, Registrar of the Supreme Court, New South Wales.—From Liverpool (2 Petitions), complaining of the great Influx of Irish Poor into that Town.—From Birmingham, for the Reduction of the Duty on Tea.—From Bury, for Limiting the Hours of Labour in Factories.

COST OF RELIEF (IRELAND).

MR. ROEBUCK begged to put the question, of which he had given notice, relative to the estimated cost of the Government scheme for relieving Ireland. He presumed that the noble Lord at the head of the Government had not prepared his plan without making some calculation—he would not say a very nice one—as to its probable cost; and he presumed also that the noble Lord had formed some plan in his own mind with respect to the means of raising the necessary sum. He therefore begged to ask the noble Lord what would be the sum requisite for carrying out his proposed scheme in reference to Ireland, and what was the mode in which the noble Lord proposed to raise the sum; so that, when the discussion came on, the House might have the advantage of full information with respect to what was one of the most important elements of the scheme, viz., its expense?

LORD J. RUSSELL: I can answer the hon. and learned Gentleman what has been the cost of the plan hitherto pursued. The amount issued from the Exchequer on account of the civil service up to the 1st of January was 1,000,000*l.*, that is to say, 990,000*l.* and odd. Since that date, further demands have been made, and up to this moment an additional million has been required of the Exchequer. Together, 2,000,000*l.* have been required under the Public Works Act and the Poor Employment Act of last Session. With regard to the expenses of the Commissariat, that is a current account; certain quantities of provisions have been bought, and certain quantities sold; and of those purchases and sales it is impossible at this moment to make an accurate account; but if the present plan is to proceed—if we are to go on under existing Acts of Parliament, supposing them to be kept in operation, we cannot expect that less than 500,000*l*. or 600,000*l*. per month will be spent, probably the sum might be even larger; and in the whole, by August or September next, it might not be less than 7,000,000*l*. But by the plan we propose, I believe there will be a reduction of expense which could not take place under existing Acts; how much that reduction may be I am not able to state; and it is impossible to tell how soon the presentment works may be discontinued. What may be the expense of the new plan, I am not in a condition to inform the House; but I conceive that it must be a reduction upon the expense incurred under the existing Acts. The hon. and learned Gentleman will see, therefore, that the amount can hardly now be estimated. We cannot yet arrive at a sufficient knowledge of the cost of the plan in operation, or of that which we propose to substitute for it. As to the provision to be made for so large an expenditure, it seems to me that it will be far better, in the present state of information, not to offer an opinion. By replying to the question, I am unwilling to commit the Government to any arrangement; and I apprehend that it will be better to reserve the matter for the financial statement, which will be made at a subsequent period of the Session. Whether that statement will be made before the ordinary time, I do not know; but sufficient notice shall be given of the intention of Government, either by my right hon. Friend or by myself.

Mr. ROEBUCK added, that the noble Lord, no doubt unintentionally, had not quite answered his question; he meant to embrace the cost of all the plans. On Monday last the noble Lord had detailed a separate scheme for the regeneration of the people of Ireland; but there was also another plan, connected with the buying of land and the loan of a quantity of money; and what he (Mr. Roebuck) wanted to know was, the probable cost of the whole of the scheme.

Lord J. RUSSELL: According to the printed question of the hon. and learned Gentleman, he wished to be informed what was the sum considered necessary to carry into effect the plans for relieving distress in Ireland, and in what way the money was to be raised. I did not, therefore, suppose that he meant to ask what will be the whole expense of the various plans of all kinds for the future improvement of Ireland. As the Bills proceed, such information as can be given will of course be furnished; but the hon. and learned Gentleman will recollect that there was a sum of 1,000,000*l*. to be divided, under what was called the Drainage Act, in loans to landowners, to which they were entitled, if they were willing to comply with the conditions of the statute. As far as that million is concerned, we merely propose to alter the conditions—not to alter them as regards the payment of interest, or time, but as to the mode in which the money is to be laid out. With regard to immediate loans, we propose that 1,000,000*l*. be advanced from the Treasury; but as to most of the sums I mentioned, it is expected, where there is no considerable outlay at the first, that these sums shall be repaid.

Mr. G. A. HAMILTON said, he had a question to ask of the right hon. Baronet the Secretary for the Home Department, of which he had given him intimation. It appeared there was a collection about to be made under the authority of a Queen's Letter, for the relief of the distressed poor in Ireland; the question he had to ask—and he believed the amount of the collection would be influenced considerably upon the answer—was this: whether the sum to be collected was to be distributed by paid commissioners—paid out of the fund, as was the case with the Newfoundland collection, and which caused some dissatisfaction—or whether, the fund, being collected from the Church in this country, it was intended to administer it by an agency with which either the heads of the Church, or the clergy of the Established Church in Ireland, with whom their brethren in this country deeply sympathized, were to be in any way connected?

Sir GEORGE GREY stated, in answer to the question of the hon. Member, that it was not intended that there should be any paid commissioners, as was the case with the collection made under the Queen's Letter for the distressed people of Newfoundland. It was the intention of Government to place the fund to be collected at the disposal of the London committee, which comprised some gentlemen of the highest character in the country, and many of the dignitaries of the Church; and, in answer to the latter part of the question, the fund would be distributed through the local relief committees in Ireland, comprising, as was well known, the clergymen of the Established Church in each parish within the district.

TIDAL HARBOURS.

Mr. RASHLEIGH, referring to a Bill which had been circulated in the country, relating to the subject of Tidal Harbours, and which, he said, contained clauses of a rather unconstitutional character, trenching considerably upon the rights as well as the privileges of the people, begged to ask whether it was to be regarded, according to a common rumour respecting it, as the production of the late Administration, or whether the existing Government intended to proceed with it in its present crude form, or with any new Bill of their own, containing similar obnoxious clauses?

Mr. WARD understood that the Bill originated in the report of a Royal Commission, appointed in consequence of the statements made by the hon. Member for Montrose (Mr. Hume), and the measure was handed down to the present Government in the state in which, as they were told, it had received the sanction of the right hon. Baronet opposite (Sir R. Peel). Under these circumstances, the Government thought it their duty to bring it in, and give the House an opportunity of considering it. It had now been for six months before the country, and means had been taken to give it publicity among the corporations and persons interested in the matter. The opinions of a great many of these had been received, and, with the exception of some of the larger corporations, there was a very general impression that some measure of this kind was very much wanted. At the same time, the Government saw the utter impossibility of carrying the Bill in its present shape, after the strong feeling that had been expressed respecting it; and upon the whole, they had determined not to proceed with it in this shape this Session. But they hoped, as the Commission had laid bare such a mass of abuses, and shown such dangers imminently threatening the harbours of the country, that all parties would agree in the necessity of some measure, and that, with the consent of all, some measure might be framed to correct the great evils which were growing up from the want of a proper controlling and superintending power.

TROOPS IN THE COLONIES.

Sir D. L. EVANS inquired what arrangement had been made, according to the promise of last Session, for placing the troops serving in some of our colonies on an equal footing with those serving at home in regard to ration stoppages?

The CHANCELLOR of the EXCHEQUER had proceeded, since the hon. and gallant Member mentioned the subject in July, to give it his best consideration, and it had also been brought to the notice of the Treasury and the Secretary at War; but arrangements of this kind, affecting distant colonies, could not be completed within the time that had since elapsed. He might state at once, however, that he believed it would be found that, taking pay and rations together, the troops serving abroad, were as nearly as possible upon an equality with those at home, or perhaps the advantage was rather on the side of the former. He might remind the hon. and gallant Member, that there were certain allowances to women and children; but it would be better not to go into detail on the present occasion.

MR. WARDLAW.—THE RIVER PLATE.

Mr. ROSS, after reminding the House that Her Majesty, in the Speech from the Throne, had called their attention to the hostilities in the River Plate, proceeded to remind them that three vessels, having succeeded in breaking the blockade, were pursued by the joint French and English force, and captured, and, as it was found impossible to remove them as prizes, they were burnt; and that President Rosas, exasperated at this, issued a decree proclaiming the whole warfare so carried on to be piratical, and declaring that he would treat as pirates any French or British officers who might fall into his hands. This proved to be no empty threat; a British officer, not taken prisoner of war, but seized on while under the solemn and sacred protection of a flag of truce, was treated under that decree as no civilized nation on the face of the earth would treat the worst of pirates. Mr. Wardlaw, acting mate in Her Majesty's ship *Racer*, was cruising off the coast, and unfortunately the whaleboat in which he was, grounded on a bank, and could not be got off. After some time he and his boat's crew observed a party of soldiers coming along the shore towards them; the soldiers displayed a flag of truce on their part in answer to his own, and, like an honest and gallant sailor, he accepted their invitation, and went boldly on shore to the commandant. On his re-appearance, a large party of armed men were observed making for the stranded boat, which had just floated again, and Mr.

Wardlaw called out to his crew from the beach, "I'm sold, I'm sold, fire—fire, and defend yourselves." The midshipman left in charge fired with effect, and he and the crew escaped the snare, and got back to the *Racer;* but poor Mr. Wardlaw they never saw again, either alive or dead. Immediate inquiry was instituted, and a demand was made that he should be liberated; the answer was, that he had fallen in a skirmish. His body was then demanded; but the men were ashamed or afraid to produce the mangled remains of this poor young man. Then the whole truth came out. It appeared that Mr. Wardlaw was told by the commandant, that if he would go down to the shore and order his boat's crew to surrender, it would be well with him; but, if not, his throat would be cut. He pretended compliance; but the moment he saw a vessel approaching his boat to capture his men, he warned his men to escape, and deliberately sacrificed his own life for the safety of his crew and the honour of his flag. He was taken back to the commandant, who ordered him to instant execution; and these savages cut off his fingers and his ears, and then put him to a lingering death. The House could not hear of such atrocities without the deepest commiseration for this gentleman. He (Mr. Ross) would now ask whether, on the promulgation of that decree of Rosas, any remonstrance or protest was made by Her Majesty's Government, or by the authorities on the spot? and, secondly, whether any correspondence had taken place since this occurrence had become known?

Viscount PALMERSTON answered, that the circumstance to which the hon. Member had adverted, had undoubtedly attracted the attention of Her Majesty's Government several months ago. The House would excuse him (Lord Palmerston) from entering at present into any discussion of the state of the relations of this country with the countries bordering upon the River Plate during the continuance of hostilities; he hoped that steps now in progress on the part of the Governments of England and France might lead to a termination of the present unfortunate state of things, and therefore he thought he should best perform his duty in not adverting to that part of the subject. But the Government did hear that the officer alluded to, being despatched in command of the whaleboat for some purpose up the river, had grounded, and that he landed under a flag of truce, and those things followed which the hon. Member had narrated. According to the account which the Government heard, the authorities of Buenos Ayres gave the answer that Mr. Wardlaw was killed in a skirmish; but there was good reason to believe that he was put to death in some inhuman manner after the skirmish was over. Her Majesty's Government, in August last, instructed Sir Thomas Herbert, who went out to take the command in the River Plate, to make inquiry into the circumstances of the case, and report to the Admiralty; but that report had not yet been received. With regard to the other point, the House might well imagine that the declaration that British officers in Her Majesty's service, acting in obedience to their orders, were to be treated as pirates, could only be met in one way by the British Government.

Mr. MONCKTON MILNES wished to learn whether the noble Lord would have any objection to the production of papers relating to the non-appointment of a British Consul at Cracow?

Viscount PALMERSTON observed, that a correspondence had taken place on the subject between the British Government and the three Powers, which had produced some asperity—the asperity, however, being on their side—and he did not see any advantage in producing it. The subject had no necessary connexion with the discussion on the incorporation of Cracow, and he saw no advantage in reviving an angry discussion on a subject which had only a passing interest.

NAVAL ARCHITECTURE.

Viscount INGESTRE rose to put a question to the hon. Gentleman the Secretary for the Admiralty. The House would recollect that last year there had been a Committee of reference on Naval Architecture, and he wished to know whether any report had been made to the Admiralty by this Committee, and whether there would be any objection to lay it on the Table of the House? He also wished to ask whether any report had been made to the Admiralty on the subject of Her Majesty's ship *Thetis,* which had been built by three members of the School of Naval Architecture, and whether the experiments tried with that vessel had turned out successfully? He should also be glad to know whether it were the intention of the Government to do anything in the way of promotion for Mr. Chatfield, one of those gentlemen to whom he had referred?

Mr. WARD said, that the question respecting the Committee of reference had been put to him on a previous occasion by his hon. Friend the Member for Montrose, whom he had told at the time that their reports were not yet brought to a conclusion, but that they would be very shortly, and he did not apprehend that there would be any objection to produce them. With regard to the *Thetis*, all that had been heard with respect to her was most satisfactory, and he had great pleasure in informing the noble Lord that the Admiralty, without waiting for reports of further trials, had removed Mr. Chatfield from Devonport to be assistant master shipwright at Woolwich.

SEED FOR IRELAND.

Mr. TUITE inquired what steps the Government meant to take to supply Ireland with seed, and whether the advances intended for that purpose would be limited to 50,000*l.*?

Mr. LABOUCHERE could only repeat the declaration made by his noble Friend the First Lord of the Treasury the other night, namely, that it was the intention of the Government to advance money to the landlords in Ireland, for the purpose of enabling them to supply their tenantry with seed. The Government did not think that they could advantageously furnish seed to the small holders of land in Ireland. With regard to the other question put by the hon. Member, whether the Government were prepared to go beyond 50,000*l.* for the purpose of providing seed, he thought it would be quite premature to make any declaration of that kind at present. Of course it would be in the power of the Government to make such a proposal; but he was not now prepared to make any announcement that such a sum would be exceeded.

TREATMENT OF CONVICTS IN THE HULKS AT WOOLWICH.

Mr. T. DUNCOMBE rose to move for a Select Committee to inquire into the treatment of convicts on board the hulks at Woolwich, and said, that he regretted to hear that it was not the intention of Her Majesty's Government to grant him the Committee for which he asked, because to concede it would not only save him the necessity of making painful statements to the House, but would save the House from hearing what was both distressing and disgusting. He should not, on the present occasion, go into our general system of prison discipline; but he should confine himself to the abuses of the system of which he complained. The House had been furnished with a return made by Mr. Capper in 1845, in which he stated that the prisoners generally had continued very healthy throughout the past year, with the exception of those at Woolwich. Now, the House would bear in mind that the hulks at Woolwich were established for what were called the invalid prisoners, and what he wished to call the attention of the Secretary of State to was, the medical neglect and cruel treatment inflicted on those prisoners. Some there were whose fate was not already decided, but, generally speaking, they were invalids. From the reports which had been made to him on the subject, he was satisfied that the medical treatment was so brutal, both as regarded the treatment of the prisoners while living and after death, as to be a disgrace to any country calling itself a civilized and Christian country. In the return to which he had alluded, it was stated by the person making that return, that the mortality on board the hulks in 1845 was only eleven persons. This mortality was contrasted in the report with the amount of mortality in the prisons of France, Philadelphia, and of Millbank Penitentiary. This morning, however, a return, for which he had moved some time since, was laid upon the Table of that House, which would serve to show the House the fraudulent manner in which these returns were sometimes made, and how much calculated they were to deceive the public. The return for which he had moved was a return of the number of persons who died on board the hulks from the Millbank prison alone; and instead of the number being eleven, as stated in the former report, the number of deaths on board the two hulks, the *Justitia* and the *Warrior*, was twenty-eight from Millbank prison alone. Yet Dr. Bossey, the surgeon of the hulks at Woolwich, took credit for the death of eleven prisoners only. How happened it that this had been the case, and why was it not discovered before? That was attributable to the system of which he complained, and under which these persons were placed. In all our other prisons, there were visiting magistrates, and there were inspectors appointed under an Act of Parliament to visit these prisons, and to make annual reports. These parties went round to the prisons, and asked the prisoners whether they had any complaint to make. With regard to the hulks, however, there were no persons to visit them, and no one to ask whether the convicts had any complaints to make, except the doctor, and occasionally the inspector from Millbank prison. The duty of endeavouring to effect the reformation of the prisoners was totally neglected. There were no prayers; nothing was done for their spiritual instruction. The only divine service on board the hulks, in which, on an average, 650 prisoners were confined during the year, took place on Sunday morning. There was no instruction of any other sort; neither was anything done to educate the prisoners. That nothing was done for them when dying, he should show by particular instances; but the chaplain seldom visited them in their last moments. There was generally what was considered the great protection of a coroner's inquest for all other prisoners; but there was none in the hulks. With respect to the medical attendant of the convicts at Woolwich (Dr. Bossey), nothing could be more cruel than his neglect of the prisoners, and when he was present, nothing could be more brutal than his conduct. There was no one to control him but Mr. Capper, who was appointed by Government superintendent of the hulks. He had been in that situation many years; but his control and superintendence had been most inefficient, and he believed that his duties had been altogether left to a nephew of his, who was his clerk, and a grocer in the Strand. Mr. Capper, notwithstanding, signed his name to the return, stating that only eleven prisoners died in 1845 at Woolwich. He had further to complain of the irresponsible power which the overseers of those ships had over the prisoners. The overseer could inflict any amount of corporal punishment which he thought proper, and there was no magistrate before whom the prisoner could go and state his case. There was a poor lunatic, named Hetherington, who was flogged by the overseer of the *Justitia* hulk. He was reported for some misconduct, and was ordered a dozen by the overseer. The moment he was taken down, the man being, it should be remembered, a lunatic, ran at the overseer, and kicked his shins, upon which the overseer ordered him another dozen. What happened then? The man was ironed, and carried to his cell, where he attempted to cut his throat. Fortunately, however, he did not do it effectually, and he was now an inmate of Bethlehem Hospital. A few years back, six men were flogged by order of the overseer, and received three dozen apiece, for being five minutes too late at muster in the morning. A former overseer of the *Justitia* ordered a man three dozen, and he said, "I am very sorry that I have not time to give you them just now, but I will give you them another day." Three months afterwards, a gang were returning from work when this man caught the eye of the overseer. "Oh," said he, "I owe you something, come here;" and he had this man stripped and flogged with three dozen lashes, for an offence which had occurred three months before. Now, with respect to the medical treatment of these prisoners by Dr. Bossey, he must say that more brutal treatment could not be conceived. He would now read to the House some cases in illustration of this statement. The first was that of

> "George Monk, or Taylor, belonging to the *Warrior*, a lunatic: he was admitted on board with a broken leg; he was allowed to lie in bed in his own water and filth until such time as a piece fell out, putrid with his urine, from the bottom of his back bone; he was sometimes handcuffed to each side of the iron bed which he lay on, at other times with a strait jacket on: he, if he were living, bore the mark on his back. This man was afterwards removed to Bethlehem."

The next case which his informant mentioned was that of—

> "An old man of the name of Peter Bailey. When Mr. Perry called, he told Mr. Bossey that the poor man ought to be sent home, and they passed on to other prisoners. This poor man got daily worse; he asked Mr. Bossey if he could see religious persons belonging to his own persuasion? He asked him what that was? He told him he belonged to the Wesleyan Methodists; and said, laying great stress on his words, what brought you here? He then began to relate a life of the most simple nature, at which Bossey began to laugh. 'Sir,' said he, 'you have more occasion to pity me than to laugh at me.' Bossey turned round to him and said to him, 'It is of no use you imagining that you will ever go home, for home you will never see; you will die on that bed you are lying on, for were your friends at the gates of the Arsenal they might come to see you: that would be all the consolation you should derive.' He died a few days afterwards. I called to see him the Friday before he died. He told me that he had had a pain at his heart every since Mr. Bossey's conversation with him, and said, 'he has broken my heart.' The next man that came under my notice was Wm. Theobald, belonging to the *Justitia*. This man was subject to apoplectic fits, besides great weakness of body. Mr. Bossey called one day when he was in a fit, and said, 'he should soon cure him.' He ordered a bucket of water to be brought to him; he got upon his bed; he ordered a tin to be given to him, and he commenced pouring the water on his head, which had no effect. The next day he saw him he told him he should have him well flogged if he found

him in any such fits as those again. He died on the 31st of July, 1844. The diet that he was receiving at the time of his death was three pints of skim-milk, and three quarters of a pound of bread. The next was James Brandish, a maniac. This man was admitted while in a fit, roaring out very lustily. This was his second time of admission into the hospital. When I saw him he was shouting out on each occasion. The first time when Mr. Bossey saw him he began to laugh at him, and told him, 'those fits would not do there.' Brandish had a fit after this which appeared to deprive him of the power of opening his jaws. Bossey placed his thumb on his cheek, and pressed against his teeth; he then opened his mouth. Bossey began to laugh, and said, 'It's all gammon, Mr. Brandish. I will have you well flogged if you don't alter your course of conduct. I will have you sent to the 'Institution,' and well flogged.' After the doctor went away I examined his mouth, and I found that his cheek was cut opposite where he pressed it with his thumb. They frequently handcuffed his hands to each side of the bed, and kept him lying in this position in his dirt and water until a large piece mortified out of the bottom part of his back, about the same place as that of George Monk. He became completely childish. The doctor frequently threatened to have him flogged. He allowed him wine before he died, a part of which he took off a few days before his death, with his usual threat of having him flogged. He died Oct. 6, 1844. The next was William Cooper. He was nurse in the hospital. I will here state how the office of nurse is fulfilled. On a man being admitted to the hospital he is put on what is termed low diet, which consists of eight ounces of bread, two pints of tea, and one pint of mutton soup. This is diet for the day. The medicine which is prescribed for all diseases when they enter is a purging draught and a calomel pill. The patient is then confined to his bed for three or four days, perhaps, when Bossey pronounces him to be recovering. He then orders him to get up and make himself useful as a nurse in waiting on the other patients, and keeping watch at night. Those watchers sit up all night, three of them taking it in turns, and dividing the watch into two hours and a half each; at this time the poor man perhaps is not able to walk, which I have frequently seen the case, the nurse often worse than the patient whom he is attending. This Cooper was one of these nurses. When he arrived at the hulks he was bad with a liver complaint, which was swelled to an enormous size. It projected two inches. I heard Bossey tell some young men who, I believe, were his and his brother's apprentices, that there was a bag of matter lying in the pit of his stomach, and he then ordered him to lie on a bed, and to strip his breast, when he commenced knocking and squeezing his sides and breast, but in particular that part where he said the bag of matter was. The next day this poor man was unable to get up. He complained bitterly to me of the treatment that Bossey gave him in bruising and pinching in the way that he did, and he ever after complained of the pain that he endured from that pinching. He said he believed that Bossey wanted to break that bag of matter which he had described to his apprentices. He died shortly after."

An Hon. MEMBER: On what authority do these statements rest?

Mr. T. DUNCOMBE would produce his authority if the House would grant him a Committee. He had authority for all that he had stated. But he had not concluded his cases:—

"Henry Heighton. Treated for six months for consumption, and kept from the hospital to the last moment. When on his death-bed was ordered out to work, which he declared he was unable to do. Dr. Bossey threatened him with punishment. He got up, and in a few hours death eased him of his troubles. In his last moments he declared he was 'a murdered man.' He entered the hospital on the 25th of May, and died the 9th of June, 1846—fifteen days. Henry Driver (Millbank prisoner).—Died through similar treatment; said to be a schemer by Bossey. Entered hospital the 21st of May, died the 26th of May, 1846—four days. This unhappy wretch had no sooner departed this life than the body, still warm, was carried over to the dead-house, and the knife at work, operating and dissecting. Entrails taken from the body, and thrown into the river, where dozens had gone before. When the dissection was over, the vacuum was filled up with flannel, then sewn up for the jury to sit on."

Was not such an inquest a mockery? He (Mr. Duncombe) wished to know too, whether this was legal under the Anatomy Act. He believed it was there said that forty-eight hours must elapse before a dissection took place, and more particularly so when a coroner's inquest was to sit. He had said that there was no medical man in attendance upon the prisoners in their dying moments. They were watched by convict nurses with the eyes of a hawk, and when they fancied the last breath had gone, the yet warm body was drawn out of bed or laid on the floor, and the bed was ransacked for money or other valuables, and then the body was conveyed to the dead-house for dissection. These people were entitled to a portion of their earnings in the dockyard and arsenal; he believed 6*d*. a-week; so that they frequently had a little money. He wished to ask the right hon. Gentleman at the head of the Home Department, whether he had any idea of these things, and whether they could exist if there were a proper system of control or inspection? There was a feeling among the prisoners that they were allowed to die for the sake of their bodies to go to the school of anatomy. He should like to know what number of bodies had been sent from the hulks at Woolwich, and to what schools of anatomy they had been sent. If the House would grant him a Committee, he would prove that Dr. Bossey had directed the mates of the ships not to answer any questions if they were asked how a death had occurred, but to refer the coroner and jury to Dr. Bossey. That officer had stated, that among the six hundred persons employed in the hulks at Woolwich only eleven had died in 1845; but he could prove by his own return that twenty-eight deaths occurred in 1845, and in 1846 the deaths were forty-one. It was totally impossible, he thought, after the statement which he had made, that the system which he had described should be allowed to continue. If the right hon. Baronet doubted the truth of the statement, let him grant the Committee, and the statement should be proved. If, however, the right hon. Gentleman admitted that such were the facts, then he would no doubt agree with him (Mr. Duncombe) that they were a disgrace to this country. The hon. Member concluded by moving for the appointment of the Select Committee.

SIR G. GREY had certainly felt considerable difficulty in following the hon. Gentleman in the statement which he had just addressed to the House. The hon. Member was much mistaken in supposing—assuming the account which he had just read to the House were true—that there could be any objection on the part of the Government to a searching inquiry, for he agreed with the hon. Member in thinking that a system such as he described was utterly unworthy of a Christian country, and could not be reprobated in language too severe. At the same time, he must say, that he had not received the least intimation till the present moment of the grounds on which the hon. Member's Motion for a Committee was based. There was not one of the charges which the hon. Gentleman had made, of which he had heard before. The hon. Gentleman had gone through a series of cases; but he thought the House would receive with some qualification statements of this kind, made probably on the authority of prisoners who were now on board the hulks, or who had been there. The hon. Gentleman had alluded to the powers of the overseers to inflict corporal punishment. He had stated that some severe punishment was inflicted some years ago. He should like to be furnished with the dates. He found from a report of the superintendent of the hulks at Woolwich to his hon. Friend the Secretary of the Admiralty, that there had been only one case of corporal punishment during the last four years. The hon. Member for Finsbury had gone into the particulars of the cases, with respect to which all that he had to say was, that it was utterly impossible to believe that the gentlemen whose duty it was to superintend the convicts could be guilty of the conduct imputed to them. Had the hon. Member given him an opportunity of becoming acquainted beforehand with the charges which he had determined to make, those charges would have undergone a most thorough and searching investigation, and he might have been prepared, which he certainly was not at that moment, to make some statement in regard to them. If, however, the hon. Gentleman would furnish him with a detail of the facts of the various cases, with the names of the parties who were prepared to vouch for the truth of the statements made, he would promise the hon. Member that the very fullest investigation should be made, when the hon. Gentleman should have every opportunity of substantiating every charge which he had brought forward. The hon. Gentleman asked for a Committee, not for a Commission. He did not wonder that the hon. Gentleman did not altogether like the idea of a commission. The hon. Gentleman had last year demanded an inquiry into the state of the Millbank Penitentiary, and a commission was appointed to investigate the case, which commission was empowered to examine witnesses upon oath, in which case, if he recollected right, the charges of the prisoner Baker were not made out. He believed that the hon. Gentleman was sincere when he intimated his belief in the charges which were then brought forward; but certainly the result of the investigation, although not satisfactory in all respects as regarded that prison, showed that the statements made against the governor were utterly unfounded. He did not think that a commission, before which the witnesses could be examined on oath, was a less satisfactory mode of arriving at the truth of statements like those just made, than was a Committee of the House, before which the witnesses could not be so examined. The statements just made, should have been communicated to the Executive Government, so as to have enabled the department of the Executive Government charged with the responsibility of examining into matters of such nature to make a counter statement, if any grounds existed upon which such counter statement could be based, instead of leaving that department ignorant until that moment of the facts upon which the charges were intended to be grounded. In his opinion the method adopted by the hon. Gentleman in this case, was not the fairest way of proceeding, and was not the mode most likely to oppose an efficient check to practices such as were complained of. There were some points of the hon. Gentleman's speech with which he partly agreed, and one of them was, that the hulk system was not, on the whole, the most efficient system. From 1843 there had been a diminution of the number of prisoners, whilst the staff of officers since that period had also diminished. In the course of November last, however, Major Jebb had commenced an investigation of the system, under his (Sir G. Grey's) direction; and the report which that officer had presented contained a recommendation that Government, in connexion with the necessity which existed for more accommodation, owing to the proposed discontinuance of the transportation system, should appoint an efficient staff of officers for the hulks. That recommendation of Major Jebb had been sanctioned by the Government, and it was at present in course of being carried into effect. With respect to religious instruction, the system had also been somewhat deficient. The chaplain was a very excellent man, but he had a very small salary, and he had not sufficient time at his disposal to devote to the religious instruction of the convicts, and he had consequently resigned the situation; a successor, however, would be appointed, with a better salary, who would be required to devote his whole time to the moral and religious instruction of the convicts. In other respects, every pains had been taken to render the establishment efficient. But even yet the inspection to which the hulks were subjected was very inefficient; but he (Sir G. Grey) was prepared to do everything in his power to remedy this evil. The hon. Gentleman was aware that the superintendence of convicts, whether at home or abroad, was devolved upon an officer designated the superintendent of convicts, Mr. Capper. It was impossible to speak of this gentleman in reference to the discharge of his important duties but in terms of the highest eulogium. He had been now for fifty or sixty years at the head of that department, and had devoted the best part of his life and all his energies to the discharge of the important duties which were devolved upon him. He was not, perhaps, now as active as before, but still there was no man more anxious to acquit himself of his duties. He saw no reason why the hulks, under a proper system of management, should not be made as efficient for their purpose as were the other prisons of the country. He was prepared to submit a Bill to the House, which Bill would contain provisions by which prisoners confined in the hulks should be subjected to a most vigilant superintendence and inspection, such as prisoners in the ordinary jails of the country were now subjected to. He had nothing more to say at present upon the subject, except to repeat his promise that if the hon. Member would furnish him with the particulars of the cases which he had just given to the House, and of other cases, come from what quarter they might, with the dates of the occurrences, a most searching investigation would be made, such as would be satisfactory to the hon. Member, to the House, and to the country. He thought, however, that it was not desirable to disturb, as the granting of a Committee would disturb, the arrangements which were now going forward respecting convict discipline and management, by disturbing and exciting public feeling, without the best grounds for so doing.

Viscount MAHON thought that the right hon. Gentleman had given valid reasons against the House concurring in the Motion just presented to it by the hon. Member for Finsbury. The hon. Member having brought forward certain charges without naming his authority, and without giving previous notice to the Government of what was the nature of these charges, was scarcely entitled to expect that the House would acquiesce in the appointment of a Committee, and should rest satisfied with the assurance given him by the right hon. Baronet, that on giving him the dates and particulars of the charges, they would immediately receive the most attentive consideration. He must at the same time, however, express his decided opinion that the working of the system of the hulks was anything but satisfactory. In every aspect in which that system of punishment could be viewed, it had been, as hitherto conducted, found inefficient, or worse than inefficient. He would state one point in reference to it, which he deemed of the greatest importance—he meant the re-imprisonment of offenders. The House would find, in Mr. Capper's report of 1842, that of the total number of convicts confined at the beginning of that year, 1,625 were known to have been previously convicted of various offences, and 487 were known to have been before in custody. Only 1,451 of the whole number were not known to have been in prison before; and even from this small number must again be deducted all those who had changed their names, or assumed an *alias,* or succeeded in concealing the fact (and all had an interest in concealing it) of their previous guilt. He must say that that single fact, to which he would now confine himself, spoke volumes. But it would be premature now to discuss the question. The discussion should be reserved until the papers bearing upon the subject were laid before the House. He only wished at the present time to guard himself against having it supposed that in resisting the Motion of the hon. Member for Finsbury, he approved of the system pursued in the hulks, and against being precluded hereafter from urging upon the Government the necessity which existed for taking immediate steps towards its amelioration.

MR. AGLIONBY regretted that the Committee demanded by the hon. Member for Finsbury was to be refused by the Government. He thought, however, that the statement just made by the right hon. Gentleman (Sir G. Grey) was very fair, and he was glad to hear that the hulk system had been amended in some degree, and that the right hon. Gentleman was perfectly willing to make the necessary inquiries, in reference to the charges just preferred by the hon. Member for Finsbury. If the hon. Member divided the House, he (Mr. Aglionby) would divide with him, as he thought a Committee of the House was the preferable tribunal before which to make the desired inquiry. He had no doubt but that the right hon. Gentleman was sincerely desirous of making the inquiry; but when an hon. Member in his place in the House chose to make a statement, referring to a subject which he had previously thoroughly investigated, and thus in some degree implicated himself before the House in connexion with his allegations, in his opinion he was entitled to a Committee, instead of having his charges laid before a Government Commission. The right hon. Baronet preferred that the inquiry should be before a commission. It was satisfactory to know that an inquiry of some nature was to be instituted in reference to statements of so very serious a character, although the inquiries before commissions were generally of a secret nature, the public press being excluded, and the public being consequently left in ignorance as to how far justice was done to them. He hoped the inquiry, in some form or other, would proceed at once and without delay. He wished that the names and dates bearing upon the cases specified had been furnished to the right hon. Baronet. It was necessary to have the inquiry in order that justice should be done not only to the public, but also to the parties who had been so seriously implicated by the charges of the hon. Member for Finsbury.

MR. WAKLEY thought that after the statements which he had made, his hon. Colleague (Mr. Duncombe) was bound to divide the House. Such a course was due both to the House and to the country, and he could not adopt any other course. He had given them to understand that he himself had made the inquiries; and he (Mr. Wakley) believed, to a certain extent, the validity of the charges adduced by the hon. Member. He confessed that he was surprised at the course which had just been taken, in reference to so serious a matter, by the right hon. Gentleman the Home Secretary. He was altogether dissatisfied with that course, and dissented from the statements which had been made by the right hon. Gentleman. It was not the duty of any Member of that House, when he had charges of this nature to prefer, to go to a Government office, in the first place, and make his statement there. The Post Office inquiry which his hon. Colleague had originated, had been conducted before parties appointed by the Government; and what had happened to the man who had given important evidence on that occasion—to Mr. Mitchell? He had been dismissed from his situation after having filled it for ten years, without having been guilty of any offence or dereliction of duty during that period. His hon. Colleague alleged that the law had been violated in every respect, in reference to the treatment of prisoners who had no means of protecting or defending themselves. So far as regarded the medical officer implicated, he did not believe in the validity of the charges preferred. He could not believe that a member of the medical profession could have acted as represented. But if he disbelieved these statements, was that any reason why he should not press, with his hon. Colleague, for an inquiry? Was a case of that kind to be left in doubt? One half of the allegations made to the House, would be more than sufficient to induce him to press for an investigation. But the right hon. Baronet alleged that he knew nothing of the facts charged before—that to most of them he attached no credit—but that he concurred with some of them. But the hon. Member who had brought them forward averred that they were all true; and was not that sufficient to induce the right hon. Gentleman to grant the required investigation? It was monstrous that, when so many helpless creatures were looking to the House for protection, that protection should be withheld. He thought that the conduct charged upon those implicated was cruel and brutal to the last degree. It was due to them that a proper investigation should take place. He entreated the right hon. Baronet to recall the opinions which he had just expressed, and to say, that when an independent Member of the House brought forward charges of this description, it was the duty of the House to grant him a Committee of Inquiry. He (Mr. Wakley), for one, would not be satisfied with such an inquiry as the right hon. Gentleman recommended, and he thought that it was the plain duty of the House to concur with the Motion of his hon. Colleague.

Mr. B. ESCOTT was quite convinced that after the statement made by the hon. Member for Finsbury, the public would not be satisfied without an inquiry being instituted. The right hon. Baronet doubted the existence of the alleged facts, but admitted that if they were true they were disgraceful to a Christian nation, and that no strength of language he could employ could adequately describe them. Why not then grant a Committee of Inquiry? The noble Lord the Member for Hereford, who was going to vote against the Motion, expressly stated that gross mal-practices existed in the Penitentiary. The noble Lord had certainly made out a case for taking a course opposite to that which he had promised. As the right hon. Gentleman the Secretary of State had referred to a commission of which he had had the honour to be a member, he begged leave to express a hope that hon. Members would refrain from passing any opinion upon the report which had been presented from that commission that morning till they had read the evidence which ought to have accompanied it. He wished to know from the right hon. Gentleman why that report had been presented without the evidence?

Sir G. GREY replied, that he was not responsible for the act to which the hon. Member had referred. All he knew was, that the evidence had been given to the printer along with the report; and the only reason why the report had been presented first, he supposed, was probably because the evidence was rather long, and would occupy a considerable time in the printing, and it was considered desirable to lay the report before the House at as early a period as possible.

Mr. FERRAND agreed with the hon. Member for Finsbury as to the mode in which commissions were generally trumped up, and as to his right to demand at the hands of the House that a Committee be forthwith appointed to inquire into the charges which he had brought forward. It was well known that if a commission were appointed, the evidence before it would be taken in secret. Even the hon. Member himself who made the charges, could not in all probability be present. Was it likely then that either he or the parties who had instigated him to bring forward his charges, would be satisfied with the inquiry which would be had before such a tribunal? If the hon. Member pressed his Motion, he would divide with him.

Mr. HUME thought that it was highly desirable to come to a proper understanding in reference to this matter. It appeared to him that the shortest way to take was to grant the Committee, and to receive the evidence. The result of that would be to bring the desired information before the House; which information might be found useful, not only with regard to the points now immediately before the House, but also with regard to what had been said by the noble Lord the Member for Hereford (Lord Mahon) in reference to the great number of convicts sent to the hulks after several previous imprisonments. It was most desirable that an efficient check should be exercised over persons entrusted with so great a degree of power.

Mr. MUNTZ agreed with the hon. Member for Montrose, and hoped that a public inquiry would be granted.

Sir WALTER JAMES thought that the hon. Member for Finsbury had not behaved with that courtesy which the right hon. Gentleman at the head of the Home Department had a right to expect, in refusing to state to him the allegations which he intended to make in his place in the House. He (Sir W. James) believed that the hon. Member for Finsbury had been guilty of a grave omission in not having performed this duty. At the same time, however, it appeared to him, upon carefully weighing the different sides of the question, that the House had better accede to the Motion for a Committee, and he hoped that the right hon. Gentleman the Home Secretary would come to the same conclusion. No doubt the hon. Member for Finsbury had frequently made mere *ad captandum* statements of grievances.

He might instance the Post Office charges of the year before last, which were much exaggerated, if not unfounded; but he thought that the present was a case which ought to be inquired into.

MR. OWEN STANLEY urged the right hon. Gentleman at the head of the Home Department to accede to the Committee. Considering the statements which had gone forth to the country, he thought that a case for inquiry had been made out. Inquiries by departments, he might add, were seldom satisfactory.

MR. EWART thought that under such circumstances it would be wrong for a Member of Parliament to entangle himself in the labyrinths of a public office. Having made statements which he believed to be true, an inquiry should be made into the truth of those statements; and he believed that the good of the parties accused, and the satisfaction of the community at large, required that that inquiry should be made before a Committee of the House.

MR. T. DUNCOMBE protested against the principle laid down by the right hon. Gentleman at the head of the Home Department—a principle utterly subversive of all inquiry, inasmuch as, were it to be established, it would be laid down that no independent Member of Parliament who had a complaint to make in that House on behalf of the public, could do so, until first—whether he possessed confidence in the existing Government or not—he had gone to a Secretary of State and laid the whole case before him, in order that he (the Secretary) might communicate with the accused parties, and be thus enabled to answer the charge. Such was not the duty of an independent Member of Parliament. All that the House of Commons had a right to require was, that he should make out a *primâ facie* case for inquiry; and if he failed in that, the discredit would rest with him. He was astonished at the allusion which the right hon. Baronet had made to the Millbank Penitentiary Commission. He had not said a word about it in his opening speech; and it was, under the circumstances, most indecent and indiscreet on the part of the right hon. Baronet to express an opinion with respect to the report of that commission. What was the state of the case with respect to that report? It had only that morning been laid upon the Table of the House. The Commissioners were three in number, namely, Lord Chichester, Lord Seymour, and Mr. B. Escott. He attended during the whole of the inquiry, and he was as good a judge of its bearing as the Commissioners themselves. But how stood the report? Why only two of the Commissioners had signed it. The third was about to make a distinct and separate report. Yet the right hon. Gentleman stated, with reference to the petition which he had presented from Mr. Baker, that most of the allegations contained in that petition were greatly exaggerated or utterly unfounded. He could tell the House, with reference to this business, that there was going on a gross and shameful attempt to persecute and harass the witnesses who had given evidence before the commission; and the right hon. Gentleman the Home Secretary had received a memorial from one of the officers, who bore testimony complaining of his having been persecuted ever since. He was sure that the public would suspend their opinion with reference to this matter until they had seen the evidence adduced. The right hon. Gentleman stated that he did not know why the evidence had not accompanied the report. But he it was who was responsible; for the document emanated not from the House, but from the Home Office. Here, however, was a clear attempt to prejudice the public mind in reference to this commission. If the evidence were to be properly and fairly circulated, he was ready to leave it to the public to decide whether his original statement was either greatly exaggerated or altogether unfounded. So much for the right hon. Gentleman and the Millbank Commission. The hon. Member for Hull (Sir Walter James) had hinted that his charge against the Post Office had also been proved to be unfounded. He might be permitted to ask whether the hon. Gentleman had seen the evidence adduced at that investigation? Was it not conducted by a secret committee? Why of course it was, and yet the hon. Member pretended to say, that his statements were not borne out by fact. The hon. Gentleman knew nothing of the facts proved. What business, then, had the hon. Gentleman to give an opinion—to say that his statements were exaggerated? Let them have the evidence, and then it would be seen whether all he had said on the subject of opening letters in the Post Office had not been fully confirmed; for it was now admitted by all that a system of espionage as regarded letters was carried on in the Post Office department, but which had now been discontinued. On the subject of his Motion, he regretted to have heard the special pleading of the right hon. Baronet the Secretary for the Home Department; the reasons thus given to the House by the right hon. Baronet for refusing his Motion should have been stated a few days ago, when he conversed with the right hon. Baronet on the subject of his Motion. The right hon. Baronet on that occasion asked him, "What was this notice about the convicts on board the hulks at Woolwich?" He stated that the Motion had originated in the cruelty inflicted on the prisoners, and the deaths which had occurred in consequence of the brutal treatment they had received, and that his hope was that a Committee would be granted to inquire. The right hon. Baronet said, "We must hear first what you have got to say;" while now his objection was, "that in place of calling for inquiry, I should have first called at his office there to deposit the documents, the authors, and the acusers." He considered he had done all that ought to be required of an independent Member of Parliament. From the statements he had made to the House, he confidently asked a commission; but it must be a commission of which he himself was a member. It was not to be expected that those who had narrated to him the facts detailed to the House, would give their evidence free and unfettered, unless they had one to protect them in whom they could confide. Unless, therefore, the right hon. Baronet the Secretary of State for the Home Department would appoint one member, the Speaker a second, himself being the third, he would feel it his duty to divide the House. Let such a commission be appointed, and he would be guided by the opinion of the other two. As he found that proposition would not be conceded to, he must divide, and he hoped the House would support him.

Sir G. GREY should be sorry to differ from the hon. Gentleman upon a question of fact. Had it not been that the hon. Member had stated certain expressions as having been used by him, he should have been under the impression that no such sentiments had fallen from him. As it was, he was bound to believe the statement of the hon. Member. According to the hon. Gentleman's statement, after having been told that the notice had been given, he had inquired what its nature was, and the hon. Gentleman had told him that it had been given in consequence of the number of deaths on board the hulks at Woolwich. Now, to the best of his (Sir G. Grey's) recollection, all that the hon. Member had said was, that he considered the inspection to be defective, and wished the hulks to be placed on the same footing as prisons.

House divided:—Ayes 44; Noes 121: Majority 77.

THE POOR LAW COMMISSION.

Mr. FERRAND rose to bring forward the Motion of which he had given the following notice:—

> "That a Select Committee be appointed to inquire into the mode adopted by the Poor Law Commissioners and their Assistant Commissioners in drawing up Reports, and their treatment of Boards of Guardians; and what control the Right honourable Sir James Graham, baronet, exercised over the Poor Law Commissioners and their Assistant Commissioners, during the time he held the office of Her Majesty's Principal Secretary of State for the Home Department:—Also, whether under the enforcement of the New Poor Law, wages have not been reduced; whether crime has not increased; whether a system of terror, instead of a system of kindness, has not been adopted towards the Poor; whether the favourable anticipations expressed in Parliament by the promoters of the New Poor Law have not entirely failed; and whether the principle upon which the New Poor Law is founded is not a direct violation of the Constitution of England."

The latter part of it was, however, not moved by the hon. Member. The hon. Member said: In bringing forward this Motion, I have to ask for the indulgence of the House, more particularly because, in 1844, the House did me, what I felt at the time, have felt ever since, and shall continue to feel till the day of my death, to have been an act of cruel injustice. I believe I shall this evening be able to convince the House that I was justified in making use of the language I did at a public meeting at Leeds; and when I refused to justify the use of that language in this House, it was not from any desire to act offensively towards it, but from a thorough conviction that a great principle was at stake, and that I had no right to be called on to answer here for any remarks I had made out of the House on the conduct of a public officer. Sir, it is not my intention to enter into a discussion of the principle of the new poor law; another opportunity for doing that will speedily occur. But perhaps I shall be allowed to say, that nothing convinces me more of the rottenness of that principle, and the debasing influence it has had on the minds of the poor of this country, than the fact that it should have received its death-blow in "a workhouse squabble." That law was the offspring of a "dark document"—

> "Monstrum horrendum, informe, ingens, cui lumen ademptum,"

the existence of which, till it was dragged forth in this House, was positively denied; and so effectually has the law carried out the intention of its authors, that in the very union where it received its death-blow in a "workhouse squabble," the poor were not only reduced to live on the coarsest kind of food—the law so degraded them that they not only ate carrion—they fought for the stinking bones they were compelled to grind as manure for the fields. No wonder a spirit has sprung up in the country that has compelled a Government, including many of those who first carried it into execution, to acknowledge that the present system cannot any longer be enforced, and must be remodelled. But I can tell the noble Lord that no remodelling of this system will satisfy the people of this country; they will never rest till justice is done to their outraged feelings by a total repeal of this infamous enactment. Sir, in support of my Motion I intend to bring before the House the opinions of the Poor Law Commissioners of each other; and in doing so I shall quote only from Parliamentary documents, the truth of which no one can deny, for they have undergone a rigid cross-examination; and if their truth is denied within the walls of the House this evening, I assert that it will be a double reason why a Committee should be granted me. Let the House listen, then, to the opinions of these poor-law administrators of themselves, they being the body of men to whom the Legislature has unconstitutionally delegated the power of making laws, which the people of this country would be justified in resisting even to death. I challenge the late Attorney General to prove that the laws so made by these three Poor Law Commissioners are in any way binding on the people of this country: there has never been a law officer of the Crown who dared in this House to maintain such a doctrine: and till those law officers do assert within these walls that the laws framed and enforced by these Commissioners are binding on the people, I say it is their duty firmly to resist them. As long as I live, I will not, in my own neighbourhood, assist in enforcing those laws; and if called on in my official capacity as a magistrate, to assist the military force in quelling a riot that may occur in resisting those laws, I would refuse to do so. But I will now proceed to lay before the House the conduct of the Poor Law Commissioners, as stated by themselves. Mr. Lewis, in answer 23,348 of the evidence taken before the Andover Committee, says—

> "There is this disadvantage which may follow from not giving reasons for the suggested resignation of assistant commissioners, that the Commissioners may call upon assistant commissioners to resign without any reasons, or without sufficient reasons, if they exercise an improper discretion. On the other hand, reasons may always be found, if they do not exist, where persons are determined to do such an act."

That is the code of morality and honour which guides the conduct of the Poor Law Commissioners towards their assistants at Somerset House. Mr. Chadwick says, that on the 30th of July he complained of some statement to Mr. Lewis, stated to be in most confidential communication with Sir J. Graham; but the only answer was, "You will get no redress from me." And what does the House suppose Mr. Chadwick complained of? Why, the late Secretary of State for the Home Department charged him with using harsh and cruel language in some of his official letters, while that language had not been used by him, but by Mr. Lewis himself. And was it not hard on Mr. Chadwick, who was doing the work of his superior officers, that he should, like me, be so unjustly, ay, and so untruly accused of being guilty of that which he had never committed? I now come to Mr. Parker's evidence. He was asked by the chairman what "duplicity" he alluded to, when he spoke of the necessity of making memoranda of conversations? And here I must, in justice to myself, call on the House to listen to what I am going to read to them, because it was struck out of the blue book. I think it ought to be stated why it did not appear, for if it had not been from an anxiety to screen an unjust attack on me, this evidence would never have been struck out of the report. Mr. Parker said, with regard to the statement of Sir J. Graham, that Mr. Mott visited the Keighley union voluntarily; that Mr. Mott notoriously received instructions from Mr. Lewis to go there: on this the chairman gave Mr. Parker a hint to confine his statements as much as possible to the Poor Law Commissioners. Mr. Parker was not to be beaten from the scent; but he has not told all the truth, though the day will come when he will have to tell it: Mr. Manners Sutton, the Under Secretary of State for the Home Department, at this point requested that the room might be cleared; and then the pen was struck through this evidence, and it did not appear in the blue book. Why did Mr. Sutton object to that evidence going forth to the world, if he wanted the truth? I want no more than the truth myself: give me that and a clear stage, and I will beat you anywhere. But the House shall now hear the opinion Sir Frankland Lewis had of Mr. Chadwick: Mr. Christie, in No. 22,620, says—

> "That is no answer to my question? Well, then, if you will have it, you must. Mr. Chadwick was an able man, but I thought him as unscrupulous and as dangerous an officer as I ever saw within the walls of an office."

Yet this Mr. Chadwick, this "dangerous and unscrupulous officer," is still secretary to the Poor Law Commissioners. Why have they not dismissed him? Because they dare not; they know, if they dismissed him, he might tell what it is to the interest of the Poor Law Commissioners and their supporters to keep secret. Next I have got the opinion of the present Attorney General, of the late Secretary of State for the Home Department, as delivered in a court of law, and which, therefore, I think I have a right to read. There was a Mr. Jenkin Jones, who held a clerkship in the Poor Law Commission Office; he was excessively useful to the Commissioners, as he had set the office to rights when it had all got into confusion. Mr. Jenkin Jones thought he was not sufficiently paid for his services; and, thinking he could venture to do a kindness for a friend, he got him into the Poor Law Office as a clerk, for which he received a sum of money. Mr. Lewis examined Mr. Jones as to his connexion with this affair. As he said he had been guilty of a misdemeanor, it was his duty to have warned him that what he said would be used in evidence against him. But, no; he adopted the principle which had been carried out in the Poor Law Commissioners' office for years. He got in this way all the evidence against him he could, and then prosecuted him, he himself being the chief prosecutor. That was another instance of the fair play of the Poor Law Commissioners. On the trial, Mr. Jones was defended by the present Attorney General, Mr. Jervis, and before the Committee, in answer to question 25,195, Mr. Jones states this:—

> "Mr. Jervis, who was my counsel, not being aware that I was standing close by him, addressed my solicitor in words to this effect: The Commissioners do not wish this case to go on, the Attorney General does not wish this case to go on, but Sir James Graham has determined that Mr. Jones shall come into court; that man is a brute."

I do not cite this with any intention of being offensive to the right hon. Baronet. I quote the fact to justify Mr. Jervis's language, and to show that his opinion was correct. I come now to the opinion Mr. Coode, the assistant secretary, gives of the conduct of the Commissioners. Poor Mr. Parker had fallen into disfavour with the Commissioners, and they determined to sacrifice him in order to save themselves. Mr. Coode, who had for some time perceived this attempt to rob Mr. Parker of his daily bread by a plot carried on at Somerset House, wrote to Mr. Parker in the following terms:—

> "My dear Parker—Although I have seen symptoms enough of a shabby desire to truckle to newspaper clamour at your or anybody else's expense, so that the Commissioners, or rather two of them, can gain some credit by it, I am still amazed at the result as shown in your letter. It is wholly unknown in the office that they had any such intention, and I hoped that your decided tone had settled them. I need not say how thoroughly disgusted I am with the whole of them, nor how glad I shall be if their abominable conduct to you turns out to be as innocuous as your calculations seemed to justify; and it would be a real gratification to see their shabby design recoil on themselves. I was going out of town by this evening's mail train, to stay a fortnight; I shall, at all events, postpone it till Monday, in order to have the opportunity of seeing you and talking with you, if you think I can be of any service to you in any way. I really desire to be useful, and I do not know the way in which I would hesitate to do so. Therefore, pray do you, without scruple, prescribe to me anything that you wish; and, if I do not do my possible, count me one of the rogues fit to serve my present masters. I do not know your movements, but I shall call and see you to-morrow, at your house. Do not hesitate to be denied, if you like that better, or make any appointments, if you think we could converse with any advantage, for any time or place you may think fit. Meanwhile, believe me most truly yours,
>
> "George Coode."

Now, that is the opinion of the assistant secretary, Mr. Coode, who had been a party with the Commissioners to all their scandalous acts—ay, and those acts will yet be made known to the world. Poor Mr. Coode! it was not long before he was sent about his business: this was rather too open and honestly spoken for those he served. I have thus given the House a number of opinions of the Commissioners; I will now give it three scenes—one in the House of Commons' Committee-room, one in the Home Office, and a third in a police court. I do not know whether the hon. Member for Finsbury No. 2, is present; but the House will remember that it was that hon. Gentleman (Mr. Wakley) who put the question to the late Secretary of State for the Home Department, whether he would cause an inquiry to be made as to a report current that the poor in Andover workhouse were living on rotten flesh—that they picked and ate the flesh from the bones they were set to grind. The right hon. Gentleman jumped up horrified, said an inquiry should be made forthwith, and that he would send a communication to the Commissioners that night. The instructions having been given, a person most unfitted to conduct such an inquiry was sent down, namely, the assistant commissioner, who had the union under his care. However, in this case, I believe he honestly and fearlessly did his duty, and made a report which proved the statement of the hon. Member for Finsbury to be correct. He went to the Home Office, and had an interview with the Secretary of State. After some discussion with that right hon. Gentleman and Sir E. Head, who happened to come in during the conversation, the right hon. Baronet tried to induce two public officers to be parties to a statement that was untrue, for the purpose of deceiving this House. Here was the Secretary of State for the Home Department teaching two public officers the art of dissimulation, and a gross neglect of duty; for how could he expect them ever to perform their duty fearlessly afterwards, when he had himself asked them to agree to a false statement, for the purpose of deceiving the House of Commons? This is what the right hon. Gentleman said, after trying to get them over and to bamboozle them; he had said it would be "stock in trade for *The Times* for six months:"—

> "Now, what am I to tell the House about this business? It will never do to produce Mr. Parker's report and these depositions. I'll tell you what I'll say—I'll begin by adverting to bone-crushing in union workhouses; then go on to say that I lost no time in communicating with the Commissioners, who forthwith replied that no information of the practices mentioned by Mr. Wakley had reached them; that Mr. Parker had been directed to make inquiries on the spot; that I had had an interview with Mr. Parker, who verbally reported to me the result of his investigation; that some of the inmates of the workhouse of depraved appetite had taken meat off the bones; that when the guardians heard of it they directed an investigation by their medical man; that the other workhouse officers had been enjoined to be careful to prevent inmates of depraved appetite gaining access to the bone-store. If I say that the assistant commissioner made this communication orally, that will possibly suffice. This report must not be produced; it must be treated as if it never had been made."

That was the evidence of Mr. Parker before the Andover Committee, and if it was not true, why did not the right hon. Gentleman go down to the Committee and prove it false? Because, in the first place, he knew it to be true; and, in the second, he would never place himself within reach of the Andover Committee. But what is it for this country to contemplate? The right hon. Gentleman has been Secretary of State for the administration of the poor laws for the last six years, the Commissioners have been his puppets, Mr. Lewis the go-between, who, day by day, received instructions from the Home Office, which, if the right hon. Gentleman would not shelter himself behind the screen of the secrecy of that office, he must admit. I have given a scene in the Home Office; I will now give one in the Committee room. On the 8th of August, 1846, Mr. Christie put to Mr. Parker the following question:—

> "Are the Commissioners in the habit of exercising control over their secretaries, assistant secretaries, and clerks, on the subject of giving evidence with respect to what goes on in the Poor Law Office?"

Nothing could be more proper than that question. The Committee was appointed, not to blink the truth, not to screen the acts of public officers, but to make a searching investigation of them. What followed this question, so fairly put by the hon. Member for Weymouth? "Mr. M. Sutton rose, and with great excitement of manner said, 'I must have the room cleared if that question is put.'" The room was cleared; what took place I do not know, but here is a report of it on good authority, which I will read to the House:—

> "The room was accordingly cleared, and the Committee for a considerable time remained in consultation with closed doors. During the interval Mr. M. Sutton rushed out of the room, apparently in a very agitated state, and soon afterwards Mr. S. Wortley followed, as if in search of him. On the return of parties some minor points connected with the evidence were disposed of, after which the Committee adjourned. But no sooner did this take place than rumours began to spread, that the abrupt departure of Mr. M. Sutton was not without reason; and that the lengthened inquiry before the Andover Committee was about to terminate in a hostile message from Mr. M. Sutton to Mr. Christie."

Now, the Andover inquiry was brought to a close by that question, to which there has never been an answer; but this House ought to have an answer, and if not the country expects one; and it will ask of its representatives, when they go to the hustings, how they could with any decency refuse a Committee that should elicit that answer? The hon. Member continued to read—

> "It is said the dispute arose in the following manner: Mr. M. Sutton, when the room was cleared, charged Mr. Christie with having put the question merely because he knew *The Times* reporter was present. Mr. Christie replied, that he treated the insinuation with contempt, and thereupon Mr. M. Sutton gave an intimation to Mr. Christie, which left upon the minds of the Committee no doubt that he contemplated sending a hostile message to the hon. Member for Weymouth. The Committee, we understand, discussed the propriety of communicating the fact to the Speaker (you, Sir), but we are not aware that they arrived at any decision on the subject. Finding how matters stood, Mr. Parker proceeded at once to the Westminster Police Court, and there, to the no small astonishment of the worthy magistrate [answerable for the peace of the country to the Secretary of State for the Home Department], who seemed at first to have some difficulty in grasping the full importance of the formidable application made to him, demanded a warrant against—[who? why]—the Under Secretary of State for the Home Department for contemplating a breach of the peace, by sending a challenge to Mr. Dougal Christie, M.P., with the view of fighting a duel. The warrant having been made out, a policeman of great size and apparent strength was commissioned to inform Mr. M. Sutton that his attendance was required at the Westminster Police Court; and so ends the last chapter in the history of the Andover Inquiry."

That was the scene in the police court. Now, Sir, I ask this House, with all gravity, is it right and just that you should refuse me a Committee of Inquiry, when a question was put to a witness before the Andover Union Committee, which, if answered, would have proved the conduct to be as cruel, as oppressive, and, I will add, as infamous as ever disgraced any public office in this kingdom? I, Sir, am one of the victims whose character has been attempted to be destroyed by these very men—these Poor Law Commissioners—because I, within these walls, fearlessly, and to the best of my humble abilities, have endeavoured to do my duty. And now, after these scenes, you shall hear the opinions of the Committee itself:—

> "That on a review of the proceedings of the Commissioners with respect to the Andover inquiries, and towards Mr. Parker and Mr. Day, it appears that they have been irregular and arbitrary, not in accordance with the statute under which they exercise their functions, and such as to shake public confidence in their administration of the law."

Well, then, I ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, are these men yet in office? are these Poor Law Commissioners yet exercising control over millions of our fellow-subjects, too poor to bring their cases before, or to claim redress in, your courts of law—who have no court to appeal to beyond this House—are you still keeping them in office? I demand from the Secretary of State for the Home Department an answer this night to that question. Are you going to screen them from any further inquiry into their conduct? Are you going to league with the late Government? Have you coalesced on this question too, and will you refuse me this inquiry? If you have, and you tell me you will refuse it, I know what the country will say—that you dare not grant it, because you are afraid of further exposure. The House will remember that, some three or four years ago, I brought under its notice an attempt of these same Poor Law Commissioners to erect a treadwheel in the borough of Halifax, in the union workhouse there. I repeated that statement in this House, on authority which I knew to be correct. The late Secretary of State for the Home Department got up in the House and contradicted me in the flattest manner. At the very time he contradicted me, the specification of the plan and the estimates of the cost were recorded in the minutes of the board of guardians of that union; and a few days afterwards, Mr. Clements, the assistant commissioner attending the board, had literally the audacity to get a resolution passed by the board, condemning me for my conduct as a Member of this House. That was a direct breach of privilege. Having received information of what had occurred, from a member of the board of guardians, I thought it my duty to come down to the House and to protest against the interference. I had the right of freedom of speech, and I maintained that right. But how did the late Government act? The late First Lord of the Treasury, with that plausibility for which he is distinguished, made a certain statement to the House, and induced the noble Lord the Member for London to join him in screening Mr. Clements; and when I brought the question of that breach of privilege before you, you negatived your own privileges, and you crushed me. There was a division: you went into the lobby with a majority, and I with only six Members. And what was the result? You emboldened Mr. Clements; he became more audacious than ever. A short time subsequently, he attended the board of guardians, and while sitting there, he had an altercation with the chairman, Mr. Weymouth, a magistrate and a gentleman; and it ended in this manner—he advanced towards the chairman, shook his fist in his face, and exclaimed, "What you said was false, and you know it was false." That was the treatment the Halifax board of guardians received from Mr. Clements, whom you protected for the purpose of crushing me, and when the point raised was breach of the privileges of this House. Now, having given a slight sketch of the opinions of these parties, who are empowered to make laws in this country, I will proceed to bring before the notice of the House the great Jenkin Jones' case, my object being to show how these Poor Law Commissioners conduct their business in their office. Before, however, I do this, I will draw the attention of the Secretary of State for the Home Department to some circumstances which occurred in Yorkshire a few years ago. The Poor Law Commissioners had issued an order to form Bradford into an union. I believe, and it was generally believed, that that order was illegal. They attempted to enforce it; the people resisted, rose up in mighty masses, and said, as they truly said, that the Commissioners had no right to make laws to govern them; that they were bound only to obey those laws made by the Parliament. The magistrates ordered in the military, and the military cut the people down in attempting to enforce an illegal law, if I may here use that phrase. Now, suppose the military had killed these people. They did cut several down, and used them, as I think, under the circumstances, with great mercy. But suppose that, by any accident, a man had been killed. Why, then, the magistrates who ordered the troops to fire, the officer who commanded them, and the troops themselves, were guilty of wilful murder. And yet it was these Commissioners who so acted, whom you still seek to screen and to protect. To return to Jenkin Jones. Having sold the office, and been induced by Mr. Lewis to make a statement which was used against him—finding he was going to be brought up for judgment, notwithstanding that he had been deceived into pleading guilty under a promise that he was not to be proceeded against, he writes a letter to the Secretary of State for the Home Department—and imagine a Secretary of State receiving such a letter as this from a public functionary, who was at that time under process of indictment for misdemeanor. I shall not read the whole of the letter, for it is very long; but I will give three or four extracts. Mr. Jenkin Jones thus addressed the Secretary of State. He says—

> "I deliberately charge Mr. Lewis (I say nothing now of another of the Commissioners) with having acted in defiance and in contempt of a clause in an Act of Parliament especially framed to prevent the very act of which he has been guilty, and by the commission of which he has rendered himself liable to penalties, and to the forfeiture of his office."

He goes on to state—

> "Mr. G. Lewis assumed to act as Commissioner, and to exercise all the powers of the Commissioners, giving directions, and" (mark here the next expression) "conducting correspondence."

Where is that correspondence? Why do you not produce it? It has been destroyed; it has not been found. When Mr. Lewis was examined before the Andover Union Committee, and asked to produce this evidence, he replied, "I don't know where it is." No, he took good care that no document which should prove him to be guilty of falsehood should be produced before any Committee of the House of Commons. He conducted correspondence, said Mr. Jones—

> "And, issuing various orders under the seal of the board, with his own name affixed at the time, and the name of another Commissioner fraudulently added afterwards."

Then Mr. Jones gives evidence, on his examination, that this letter was written on May 9, before he received the message through Mr. Coode, which was on June 7. The letter proceeded—

> "I do not dwell upon the important public effect of such illegal issue of orders by any one of the Commissioners. I request your especial attention to the fact, that Mr. Lewis was actually committing the misdemeanor daily, during a portion of the period that he was industriously hunting up evidence to convict me. I am prepared to prove my charge (I have no wish to do so) upon the evidence of the Secretaries of State, who will prove that no delegation was issued. In my case, if guilty, I, a mere private clerk, at a salary of 200*l.* per annum, commit an offence against an Act of Parliament, of the existence of which, as God is my witness, I never heard, until after Mr. Lewis, in the most ungenerous and unjust manner, extracted all he could from me, to be used in evidence against me. Mr. Lewis, a highly responsible public officer, having a salary of 2,000*l.*, ten times the amount received by me, and quite aware of the process of delegating the power of the Commissioners—it being the practice of the Commissioners, when they take their usual and recognised holidays, to obtain a delegation from one of the Secretaries of State—I submit, that the offence committed by him was manifestly committed deliberately and wilfully; and I feel that I am justified in saying, that legally he has been guilty of

a misdemeanor, and morally of a fraud upon the public, upon the Home Government, and upon both Houses of Parliament."

I ask, again, after this, is Mr. Lewis still a Poor Law Commissioner? If he is, do you intend that he should remain so? The country will demand an answer to that question; you may depend upon it they will, when they have heard all I am about to state to-night. Mr. Jenkin Jones went on to say—

"That Mr. Lewis himself having committed a misdemeanor, and in the act of committing one whilst hunting up evidence to commit me, is manifestly an improper person to take the conduct of the proceedings in my case."

And to justify this charge, he gave further evidence to the Secretary of State. Mark that the right hon. Baronet cannot deny having received this letter; for Mr. O'Brien, or Captain O'Brien, his secretary, acknowledged the receipt of it. I can imagine the alarm of the right hon. Baronet on reading this letter. I have no doubt whatever that he immediately sent for Mr. Lewis, and said to him, "This is an awkward business of Jenkin Jones. He is going to tell all, depend upon it; he wont stop at an attack on you; we must take care what we are doing, for he knows a great deal." And so in this way, very probably, they talked the matter over; and it appeared that the alarm produced a wonderful effect both in the Home Department and Somerset House. On June 7th, Mr. Jenkin Jones receives a message from Mr. Lewis, the Commissioner who was in daily and confidential communication with the late Secretary for the Home Department, who was the go-between, as I said before. And what says Mr. Coode, as mouth-piece of Mr. Lewis? He says—

"Mr. George Lewis has authorized me to tell you, that it was far from the wish of the Commissioners to injure you; that their only object was to trace out the truth of the matter; and that, having ascertained that none of their present officers are implicated, they are not desirous of pushing this case further; and if you adopt the course you were speaking to me upon, if you plead guilty, they will not push the matter further."

Well, then, this poor wretched clerk—this victim of Mr. Lewis and the Home Office, pleads guilty; they bring him up for judgment, in defiance of their solemn pledge to prosecute him no further, given by the men who thus had extracted the evidence which could convict him, and which, to hasten that purpose, they most infamously used. It is no wonder that the present Attorney General spoke in the language I have quoted to the House—it is no wonder his indignation was aroused when he saw his client the victim to such a conspiracy. He was sentenced to twelve months' imprisonment; but Mr. Jones was not long in prison before he petitioned the Home Office—before he brought his case under the consideration of the right hon. Baronet, who had acknowledged the receipt of the letter, extracts from which I have read to the House; but now the Secretary of State takes no notice of the man's petition, and Mr. Jenkin Jones determines to stand it no longer. He writes a letter to Mr. Coode, who had delivered the message from Mr. Lewis. It is dated July 10th, 1845:—

"Dear Sir—It is nearly three months since I petitioned the Home Office. The draught of my petition was approved of by the Commissioners; and Mr. Lewis promised to take an opportunity of speaking to Sir James Graham in its support. In consequence of this promise, I purposely omitted alluding to the fact of my having withdrawn my plea, upon a promise of Mr. Lewis, that he would secure a lenient course, and a course that should not injure me, &c. As to those expressions, I took the precaution, in all my correspondence, to confine myself to the adopted expressions; and those were adopted expressions as contained in my original letter to Mr. Coode. Now, I must state candidly, that it is my firm conviction (my petition having been rejected) that Mr. Lewis has not spoken in my behalf to Sir James Graham. Perhaps he has not had an opportunity; you will, therefore, oblige me by asking him if he has performed his promise, and, if not, whether he will seek an opportunity of stating the facts to Sir James Graham. I am now almost indifferent about a mitigation; but I am not indifferent to the damnable fact that I have been entrapped and grossly deceived, and shall never forget the fact, unless I receive some satisfaction. I want to cease thinking of the matter; but that will never be the case, unless I obtain some mitigation, and that through the exertions of Mr. Lewis. The matter cannot, and shall not, rest as it is.

"Mr. DISRAELI asks: What was your sentence?—Twelve months' imprisonment.

"Mr. S. WORTLEY: Have you the answer to that letter?—The answer was a verbal one. I believe it was not in confidence; if so, nothing would induce me to betray it. Mr. Coode called on me, and seeing I had given so short a time—Tuesday at the latest—Mr. Coode stated I had better not do anything hastily; I had better wait a bit, and see what could be done. I was liberated almost immediately after, without making any application; nor do I know to this moment by what means I was so, but I was told I was no longer to be detained.

"Mr. DISRAELI: How long were you in prison?—Eight months.

"Mr. CHRISTIE: How long after you wrote this letter did you obtain your liberation?—I was liberated on the 23rd."

So Mr. Jenkin Jones was successful at last; but, remember, Mr. Jenkin Jones was not considered by his employers to have been in the slightest degree injured by the incarceration. He had been clerk in an assurance-office, for he had left Somerset House; and when he returned from prison, the company presented him with 100 guineas, and reinstated him. It was thought this was enough; he was let out of prison, and the reasons for his having been sent there may be learnt from Mr. Lewis. Mr. Christie—and I must congratulate that hon. Gentleman on all the talent he exhibited in encountering the Secretary of State in screening this man—says to Mr. Lewis —

> "You admit, that when Mr. Coode told you that about Mr. Parker, and the danger you were incurring from him, you might have said something about Mr. Jenkin Jones, that he had done you no harm. What harm could he have done you?—He was employed in the office, and had access to all the office documents. We had proceeded in a very adverse manner against him.
>
> "I still want to know what harm he could have done you?—By the disclosure of official information. All persons who have been employed in a confidential capacity have it in their power to create inconvenience by violating confidence.
>
> "Inconvenience is not injury. I want to know in what way Mr. Jenkin Jones, by means of his confidential access to the official documents of the Poor Law Commissioners, could have caused you injury?—I am not aware that I used the word 'injury.'
>
> "You wish to restrict yourself to inconvenience, then?—In conversation I may have used the word 'injury'—to do harm to the office.
>
> "Did Mr. Coode say any more than this, that Mr. Parker might inconvenience you?—I cannot remember the circumstances sufficiently to state."

Here I must break off for one instant to say that I never saw witnesses who adopted more ingeniously the *non mi recordo* tactics than some of the gentlemen examined during this investigation. It was very different when the Under Secretary put a question; "then," says Mr. Lewis, "I am quite certain." The memory was not always so good. Mr. Lewis says —

> "I thought you said, yesterday, Mr. Coode stated that Mr. Parker was a man who would attack you in every way?—I cannot remember the precise words.
>
> "Why could Mr. Jenkin Jones's, or Mr. Parker's access to official documents enable them to attack you?—Every person who has been employed in a confidential capacity in an office or in any other manner, has it in his power to make disclosures which may create great embarrassments and difficulty, and raise presumptions against the conduct of persons, which it may be difficult to remove without referring to other information which it is desirable not to produce."

Sir, the records of that office are destroyed. Why was this, if every thing was fair and above board? Mr. Lewis was the corresponding agent of that office; but where are his private letters? I have a right to demand from the right hon. Baronet, who was in confidential communication with this man every day, where are they all? Mr. Lewis says he can't find them. Then, is it not the duty of the House to grant a Committee before which Mr. Lewis may be asked why they were destroyed, how they were destroyed, if they were burnt, or purloined, some of them still to be forthcoming? That is a matter which it is the duty of this House to inquire into. You know that there are documents in existence which you would give a good deal to have again; you haven't got them yet, and what is more, you wont have them. Now, listen again:—

> "After his (Mr. J. Jones's) plea of guilty," says Mr. Lewis, "I was absent from London for a time, and some communication was made to Mr. Coode, which induced him to write to me on the subject."

Mr Coode wrote a letter, and gave, no doubt, very correct information touching the case; but when Mr. Lewis is asked for this document, he says, "I have not the letter, but a copy of my answer, which I will read to the Committee." What a great deal of information the Committee got from that! The answer was—

> "It appears to me that the honour of our office has been sufficiently vindicated by the searching investigation into Mr. Jones's proceedings, which was made first by us, and afterwards by Mr. Reynolds."

The idea of talking of the honour of the Poor Law Commissioners' office! I will ask, where is Mr. Lewis's honour? Where is the honour of the man who inveigled this poor fellow into a confession of his guilt in having committed a misdemeanor, he himself having been daily guilty of misdemeanor, and of something not very creditable in obtaining Mr. Jones's confession? I say that Mr. Lewis is branded with dishonour by his conduct towards that man. Now, Sir, I have gone through Mr. Jenkin Jones's case; and I am now going to bring before the notice of the House some circumstances in which I myself am implicated. I have, on a former occasion, charged the right hon. Baronet with having prepared a statement for the House, in which he intentionally sought to deceive it; and I now again distinctly charge the late Secretary of State for the Home Department with making a statement to this House which at the time he knew to be untrue. I am going to give the House an account of the mode adopted by the Poor

Law Commissioners, and by the late Home Secretary, in getting up those reports; two of which were used, one to crush the hon. and learned Member for Bolton (Dr. Bowring), in 1842, and the other to crush me, in 1844. The person employed in that nefarious transaction was a man of the name of Mott, who formerly gained a livelihood by farming the poor in several large poorhouses in London, and by carrying out the cheap Malthusian doctrine of teaching the pauper to live on the coarsest sort of food, and that in the smallest possible quantity. He recommended himself to the authors of the new poor law, by displaying much valuable information as to the best manner of accomplishing this end, and in time he became an assistant poor-law commissioner. Dismissed from this office for reasons which you have never dared to tell the public, but which I will to-night tell both the public and the House, he still contrived to be kept in employment by Somerset House. He no sooner ceased to be assistant commissioner than he appeared in a new character—as the editor and publisher of *The New Poor Law Circular*, and under the sanction of the Poor Law Commissioners. At the same time, he published in his circular a statement purporting to be a communication from the Poor Law Commissioners to the Longtown union, of which the late Secretary of State for the Home Department was then the chairman, to the effect that the guardians would be sanctioned and allowed by the Commissioners to take a certain number of copies of this paper, as it would only relate to matters connected with the poor law. Well, Mr. Mott goes on under this patronage as a publisher for some time, and very soon, because no one would buy it, the paper became bankrupt. No wonder such should have been the result with any man having dealings with the Poor Law Commissioners. Then, in what character does Mr. Mott appear next? Why, as a partner in that den of horrors—the Haydock Lunatic Asylum, along with Mr. Coode, and with the knowledge of the Poor Law Commissioners. Good God, Sir! is not this disgraceful? Do you remember the harrowing details connected with that establishment brought before this House by the hon. Member for Finsbury? The distressing and painful statements made as to the treatment of the unfortunate people confined there? You have dismissed Coode, but you still keep the Poor Law Commissioners; and why? Because they have influence with men in power—a course, this, utterly inconsistent with my notions of the old independent English spirit. My hon. Friend, however, completely smashed the head of that Haydock affair, though, to use an expression which, if I recollect right, my hon. Friend used, there was sent a trumped-up commission to investigate its enormities. I am now going to read an extract from a speech delivered by the late Secretary of State for the Home Department, to whom, at the time he made use of the language there contained, it must have been known that Mott had been guilty of base and dishonourable conduct. The late Home Secretary speaks as follows:—

> "But in regard to this subject I am not now about to cite the information of the assistant poor law commissioners; I am not disposed in the least to disparage those gentlemen. There are no persons upon whose reports, speaking from experience, I, for one, would be more disposed to rely with confidence."

"Speaking from experience!" This was said on the 17th of June, 1842, the very day on which the right hon. Baronet drew out of the red box at that Table the report on which I, a magistrate, a country gentleman, was branded with ungentlemanly conduct in the parish to which I belong. I had been an acknowledged and serviceable Member of this House, and supporter of the Government of that day; for, previously to the production of that report, the right hon. Gentleman had thanked me for the services I had rendered; and, had he been animated by a generous, manly, and gentlemanly feeling, he would have been induced, before attacking me in Parliament, to say "Mr. Ferrand, I have received from Mr. Mott a report as to the state of your union; it attacks you as a local magistrate with encouraging legal disputes, that the lawyers may pocket the fees; it gives me grounds for charging you with advocating the support of the poor in terms of the 43rd of Elizabeth, in order that you might cheaply earn the title of the poor man's guardian." But no hint did I receive from the Secretary for the Home Department of the accusation which he meant to bring against me. Even the assassin, when he stabs you from behind in the dark, may give you some chance of defending yourself; but not so the Secretary of State for the Home Department; and I must say, that to attack me in so unmanly and ungenerous a way was only a part and parcel of the character of the late Secretary of State for the Home Department. I will come to the report on which that attack was founded by and by; but in the meantime, let me trace the course of Mr. Mott. Mr. Manners Sutton, before the Committee, asked Mr. George Lewis as follows:—

> "Some remarks have been made to the Committee with regard to a report which was prepared by Mr. Mott, and Mr. Gilbert, and Mr. Chadwick, upon the state of Bolton and of Macclesfield. Are you aware of the nature of the evidence on that subject which has been laid before this Committee?"

Now, Mr. Chadwick had fairly let the cat out of the bag, and Mr. Lewis came down to the Committee in a towering rage in a day or two after to give his evidence in opposition to that of Mr. Chadwick. He states in reply to the question I have just read, that he had seen Mr. Chadwick's evidence on the subject, on which Mr. Sutton asks—

> "Have you any remarks to make upon that subject?" "The report," replies Mr. Lewis, "to which the Committee refers, was, I believe, substantially prepared by Mr. Chadwick, and was sent in with Mr. Mott's signature in April 1841."

Here you have the fact of Mr. Chadwick drawing up a report in Somerset House, going with it to Mr. Mott, and Mr. Mott signing it as a report drawn up by himself! Further, in answer to a question put by Mr. Christie, he states as the ground for believing this to be the fact, that—

> "Mr. Owen informed me, I think, that it had been copied from a draught in the office; but I think Mr. Chadwick himself states substantially that he had been the author of it."

It appears, then, that these Poor Law Commissioners keep a draught in the office, from which may be copied reports to suit the different parts of the country. Mr. M. Sutton asks, "Was that report sent in 1841?" and the reply is, "The copy I have is dated the 30th of April, 1841;" but he adds, in answer to another question, that there is in it "a quotation of some evidence which purports to have been taken on the 3rd of May, 1841;" and this report is given in on the 2nd of June. Such is the way in which these reports have been drawn up by Mr. Mott, and Mr. Chadwick, and the Poor Law Commissioners, and on which the late Secretary for the Home Department always relied "with so much confidence." We shall now see how the Bolton report was drawn up. The hon. Member for Bolton, it will be recollected, made certain statements in this House as to the condition of the poor in the Bolton union. They were most harrowing statements, and such as it was truly dreadful to contemplate; and after they had been made, and repeated two or three times, the late Secretary for the Home Department proposed to the Poor Law Commissioners that special commissioners should be sent down to Bolton to inquire into the truth of the allegation; and, accordingly, this man Mott was sent down. Well, how did he acquit himself? Mr. Phillips, the private secretary of the right hon. Secretary for the Home Department, had written to the Poor Law Commissioners, instructing them "to employ Mott to inquire into certain statements made by Dr. Bowring." Mott went to Bolton, but he never investigated a single case; he avoided putting himself in communication with those who could have informed him, and resided a short distance out of Bolton. The inhabitants employed a gentleman, Mr. Naisby, to bring witnesses before him to bear out the statements which had been made by their representative, Dr. Bowring, in this House. Mr. Naisby goes accordingly to the house in which he resided, and asks for Mr. Mott. The servant answers, "He is not in." "Are you sure of that?" is the next question. "Oh, yes, he went to London yesterday." Mr. Naisby accordingly retired from the door, and, looking up to one of the windows, saw Mr. Mott in the room. This is the man who was employed in 1841 to make this inquiry, and who drew up a false report against me in 1842. On the 24th of September, Mott sent a report of his visit to Bolton from Manchester. On the 30th of September that report was used by the late Home Secretary in this House, with a view to crush the hon. Member for Bolton. I was not then so well informed as I am now upon such matters, and, with other Members of the House, I cheered the statement of the Home Secretary. However, Mr. Ashworth, and other respectable persons in Bolton, were determined that these proceedings against their Member should not go on unopposed; and twelve witnesses were brought before the magistrates, who gave evidence proving that Mott's report was a scandalous falsehood. Nor was that all. On the 14th of December, 1841, the hon. Member for Bolton forwarded to the late Home Secretary a statement, distinctly proving that Mott's report was false, signed by Mr, Ashworth and several other gentlemen. That statement commenced as follows:—

> "We, the undersigned, inhabitants and rate-

payers of the township of Little Bolton, being the parties who instituted an inquiry into the condition of some of the labouring classes of this township in December of last year, feel called upon to notice some part of a report made by Charles Mott, Esq., to the Home Office, and printed by order of Parliament, the 6th of October, 1841."

They then proceeded—

> "We cannot but express our surprise and regret that a public functionary, holding the high and responsible offices of Assistant Poor Law Commissioner as well as Special Government Commissioner for inquiring into some particular cases of destitution, should have so far forgotten the trust reposed in him, and so far have wandered from the obvious line of his duty, as to impute unworthy motives to the parties who instituted the distressing inquiry. Nor has he been satisfied with imputing motives; he has ventured, without personal investigation of his own, without any effort to ascertain the truth of the statement made, to accuse us of partisanship and of misrepresentation, leaving the impression that we had invented or exaggerated tales of distress in order to serve a political and party object. We deny the accusation, and complain of the levity and carelessness in which it has been made."

And they concluded thus:—

> "But, from the best information we can obtain, we have good reason to believe that Mr. Mott himself never visited a single case, and certainly avoided putting himself in communication with those who, with much labour, had undertaken the painful duty of examining into the sad condition of the people. Signed—E. Ashworth, J. Entwisle, G. Knott, J. Lomax, J. Barry, T. Lee, T. Thomasson, J. Goodbrand, J. Haigh, J. Mackinnell, J. Vickers, R. Walsh, N. Wilson."

On the 15th of December, Mr. Naisby laid the evidence of the twelve witnesses before the Secretary for the Home Department—evidence given on their oaths, that the report of Mott was false; and all this took place long before the 17th of June, 1842. I must state that the late Home Secretary, notwithstanding these statements, still continued to shield Mott, and refused inquiry. On the 21st of January, 1842, Mr. Bolling, brother of the late Conservative Member for Bolton, wrote to the Home Secretary in these words:—

> "It is only when the assistant commissioner, leaving so legitimate and commendable a course of inquiry, deals in unfounded statements and slanderous insinuations, and when, moreover, the board under whose authority he acts ventures upon publishing them, that I feel called upon to draw your attention to the 'report and evidence.'"

Again—

> "This counter-statement of 'Bristol's case' I offer in answer to the false and calumnious charges which the 'report and evidence' were manifestly intended to convey to the public; and I shall leave to you, Sir, the duty of ascertaining upon what principle of fairness the parties, whoever they may be, who took down the evidence, could have proceeded, and by what rule of constitutional law or common justice the board of Poor Law Commissioners can sanction a mode of inquiry so completely partial, so flagrantly unjust."

And he added—

> "I have endeavoured to lay before you, as briefly as possible, those points of which I think I have just reason to complain in the published correspondence between the Home Office and the Poor Law Commissioners on the subject of distress in Bolton; and I confidently anticipate from that department of the Government over which you preside, such an investigation into the peculiar circumstances of that inquiry by the Poor Law Commissioners, as shall not merely do justice to the individual who feels himself aggrieved, but shall at the same time satisfy the public.

When the late Secretary for the Home Department received that letter, then I believe some communication was made to Mott with a view to an explanation. On the 3rd of March the hon. Member for Bolton moved for returns of the papers in this case, and they were granted to the hon. Gentleman, who has maintained an extraordinary silence on the subject ever since. But I recollect that there was a statement made by the late Home Secretary on the 26th of April, 1844, when I defended the attack I had made at Leeds. On that occasion he said—

> "I see the hon. Member for Bolton (Dr. Bowring) in his place, and he, I think, is acquainted with a transaction which may in some measure account for the removal of Mr. Mott."

I now ask the hon. Member for Bolton, what was it? [Dr. Bowring did not wish to interrupt the debate.] Then I hope the hon. Gentleman will afterwards state to the House what were the reasons; because, if Mott had been guilty of such scandalous conduct in 1841 towards the hon. Gentleman, as drawing up a report which was false, and which had been used in this House for the purpose of crushing him, then I ask, in the name of common sense, and in the name of common justice, how could you (Sir J. Graham) have employed that man in 1842 to draw up a report against me, and use it in this House, without giving me one word by way of hint as to your intention, being convinced beforehand that this man had been found guilty of framing a false report against Dr. Bowring? I come now to the Keighley union case; and I think I have a perfect right to make the statement to the House which I now propose to make. I assert that the right hon. Baronet the late Secretary for the Home Department was guilty of a breach of agreement with me. I received a message from the late Secretary for the Home Department, within a day or two of making my speech against the Anti-Corn-Law League, requesting my attendance at the Home Office. I went there, and the right hon. Baronet tried to induce me to withdraw my opposition to the Government on the question of the new poor law. I told him I was solemnly pledged to my constituents to oppose them on that point, as I was conscientiously convinced it was a cruel, oppressive, and tyrannical law, and nothing could induce me to withdraw my opposition. After a lengthened conversation on that and other subjects, we parted, on the distinct pledge that I was perfectly at liberty, without giving any offence to the Government, to follow any course I chose in opposing that measure. After having come to that understanding with the right hon. Baronet, I do think that there is scarcely an instance on record, in the history of the debates of this House, of a Minister of the Crown having taken such an unfair advantage of any Member. On the 17th of June, 1842, he drew out of his red box Mott's report, and said, "I, for one, speaking from experience, have perfect confidence in this report." And he went on to say—

> "I hold in my hand a report from Mr. Mott as to the present state and condition of this very union of Keighley, about which the hon. Member said so much. . . This report of Mr. Mott is dated the 23rd of April last. Mr. Mott says, speaking of this union—'Relief in aid of wages is generally given, and payment of rents to an alarming extent; the workhouses are not subject either to classification or discipline; all the errors of the old poor law are followed; the paupers insolently claim relief as their right. I need scarcely add, that the rates are fast increasing. To show the mischievous extent to which the practice of paying rents has arrived, I submit the following notice, which was brought to the meeting of the guardians by a pauper, and submitted on his behalf by one of the relieving officers:—'I hereby certify, that Edward Walton will be indebted to his landlord, the Rev. John Swire, one year's rent, 3*l.* 3*s.*, on the 13th day of May next.' (Lord John Russell here said—'When was this?') Sir James Graham—'In April of the present year.'"

Now it is perfectly true that this man did present this piece of paper, but it was kicked out as a matter not to be entertained; yet this fact is left out of the report! I will here mention a circumstance to the House worthy of notice, in connexion with this matter. There were residing there at that time four Whig magistrates, one of whom was the hon. Member for Bradford, and who had taken an active part in carrying out the poor law in the union; but so disgusted were they with the untruths told by this man, Mott, that they have never entered the board since. Thus the falsehood of this man has driven from the management of the poor law four of the most respectable gentlemen in the neighbourhood. I will just mention another circumstance. Sir J. Walsham was employed to go down, at the suggestion of the late Secretary for the Home Department, to visit this union; but he got instructions to draw up a grand flaming report as to the horrible state of the workhouse, which was to be handed to the Secretary for the Home Department; in short, he was to come down on me with another slashing attack, which he did; but still the report of Sir J. Walsham contradicted that of Mott almost throughout. Now I come to the charges of the late Secretary for the Home Department. When he addressed the House, he turned round, and, pointing at me in an offensive manner, said—

> "Now, this is the result of the objection to the three kings of Somerset House; this is the result of a wish to revert to the local magistracy; those who can get an easy character for great humanity; those who can obtain the title of the 'poor man's friend'—this is the result of giving the power of issuing orders of relief, which are to be administered by third parties. Mr. Mott," the right hon. Baronet continues, "goes on to say, 'and I was surprised to find that an opinion prevailed among the guardians that their proceedings in granting relief were subject to the control of the magistrates.'"

This the magistrates deny; they deny that they took the control of the union; they deny that Mr. Mott's report is a true report. The right hon. Baronet said—

> "This report is dated the 23rd of April, in the present year, and this is the state of things in the north of England; the very district which is favoured by the presence of the hon. Member himself, and here you have the very word 'scale' adopted, which has, it seems, been exploded in the south."

Why, it has been proved that at Keighley this scale has never been adopted at all. The right hon. Baronet went on:—

> "So much for the Keighley union; and if I were not fearful of troubling the House too much, I would go further; for perhaps the hon. Member would like me to complete the picture of the Keighley union." Here there were cries of "Go on." He continued: "Well, I will go on. Having shown what is the mismanagement in this union, I will expose some of the jobbing that has taken place there. I continue to read from Mr. Mott's report. He says: 'Amongst other extraordinary proceedings of the guardians of the Keighley union, may be named the encouragement given to lawyers to create legal disputes.' My hon. Friend the Member for Macclesfield complained of the manner in which the lawyers were excluded from all adjudication under the management of the existing law. Now we will see how they do

> act when they are employed, not by the three kings of Somerset House, but under the authority of the local magistracy."

And then the right hon. Baronet read a statement in which there was not one word of truth; the whole of it throughout is a trumped-up falsehood, and was proved to be a flagrant falsehood even before the packed Committee on the Keighley Union, who were charged to inquire into, and report to the House, all the charges against the local magistracy. Now I ask the attention of the House to a circumstance which took place at that time—on that very day. As soon as the late Secretary of State for the Home Department had read this report, I rose and denied the truth of it. But there were parties who had given me information that the right hon. Baronet and the Poor Law Commissioners were in league. I received this between the 17th of June and the 20th; and on the 20th of June, three days after, I got up and said that the right hon. Baronet the late Secretary of State for the Home Department had, on the 17th, referred to a report from assistant poor-law commissioner Mott; that Mr. Mott had been sent down expressly for the purpose of getting up a case in favour of the Bill, and against the Keighley union—

> "And that a paid officer of the Government had, for a special purpose, produced a report containing unfounded charges, with a view of misleading the House of Commons."

I stated this in the presence of the right hon. Baronet, and he never contradicted or denied it. I made this statement in 1842, in this House, and I repeat it now. I will tell the House and the right hon. Gentleman my reasons. I will not tell him all my reasons; I will tell him one; I have a great many more. One reason is, that, on the 24th of June, the right hon. Baronet the Member for Tamworth got up and addressed the House in favour of the new poor law, during which I saw the right hon. Baronet the Secretary of State for the Home Department bring forward a red box; and when I saw him do this, I said, "I suppose I am going to have another dose of Mott;" but, instead of this, he handed to the right hon. Baronet the then First Lord of the Treasury Sir John Walsham's report, pointing out to him only that part which related to the Bingley and Keighley workhouses, which the late Secretary of State had suggested that he should visit. The right hon. Baronet (Sir R. Peel), however, read to the House most of the horrifying statements of the state of things in the poorhouses, living and dead confounded together, and said to me and to the House, "Is it not high time to interfere?" Why, Sir John Walsham had had previous instructions to go down and to draw up a report; and when I challenged the right hon. Baronet (Sir J. Graham) to deny it, he could not, but talked of a mistake. On the 27th of June, I declared that I knew several of the extracts which had been read by the First Lord of the Treasury from Sir John Walsham's report to be false, and that I was convinced Sir John Walsham had been sent down to get up a statement to use against me in the House of Commons; and I asked the right hon. Baronet (Sir J. Graham) whether he did not know of Sir John Walsham's having been sent down to the Keighley union previous to the debate? Mark! The right hon. Baronet the late Secretary of State got up, and, in rather a confused manner, said—

> "I will begin by answering that part which more immediately relates to myself, viz. that Sir John Walsham was directed to visit the Keighley union immediately before the present debate. After I had understood that some very strong objections had been taken to issue an out-door relief order for Keighley, founded on Mr. Mott's report, Sir John Walsham being in the neighbourhood, and not sent specially to Keighley, but being in the Burnley union, I suggested to the Poor Law Commissioners, in order to remove all doubt upon the subject, that Sir John Walsham should be sent there."

Now, it is an extraordinary circumstance, and not less extraordinary than true, that Sir John does not allude in his report to the subject of out-door relief; he never mentions it, except slightly and cursorily; but never speaks of any strong objections to it. Subsequently to this, Sir John Walsham was sent to visit the Keighley workhouse, and to get up a report upon that subject, if not by the order of the late Secretary of State, at all events with his cognizance. But what will the House say to the statement I am about to make? I moved for returns which would enable me to prove the falsehood of the reports; and the right hon. Gentleman the late Secretary of State for the Home Department said he would oppose the production of those returns. I appealed to the candour and fairness of the noble Lord the Member for the city of London; and he said, if I divided the House upon the Motion, he would support me; and I got the papers. What did those papers prove? Why the last day of the old poor law; and I now call upon the right hon. Baronet (Sir J. Graham) to retract the charge he made against me—on the last day of the old poor law being enforced in my parish, the number of inmates in the Bingley poorhouse was twelve, and during Sir John Walsham's visit it was fifty-six. I now ask the right hon. Baronet whether he is ready to retract the charge he made against me? Well, a Select Committee was appointed on the Keighley Union, and I will tell the House the grounds upon which I feel justified in saying that it was packed. Sir Thomas Fremantle (who was then what is called "whipper-in") came to me with a list of the Committee, and said, "I am so convinced of the falsehood of the report, that I don't care whom you have on the Committee." I was then a novice in these matters; and I thought I could trust Sir T. Fremantle as a man of honour, and he packed the Committee. He asked Colonel Wood to be a member, but Colonel Wood said he could not, as he was going out of town; and yet Sir Thomas left his name on the Committee, and by the absence of Colonel Wood we had one member short in our way of thinking. On the 21st of July, before the papers were laid on the Table of the House, an order was sent to the Keighley union, with the signature of the Secretary of State, suspending the out-door relief order. Now, I will prove a part of Mr. Mott's report to be false. He wrote (on the 23rd of April, 1842)—

> "Gentlemen—I attended a meeting of the board of guardians of the Keighley union on the 13th instant, and I regret to have to report to your board that the proceedings of the guardians are very unsatisfactory; in short, they are entirely at variance with the provisions of the law and the directions of your board."

Why, the returns I moved for from the Poor Law Commissioners ought to have shown that the proceedings of the board of guardians of the Keighley union were contrary to the directions of the Commissioners; whereas the Commissioners, in their return, say that "they have no written evidence to show in what respect the said board of guardians have acted contrary to the directions of the central board at Somerset House:" so that they give a positive contradiction to the statement made by Mr. Mott in the very first paragraph of his report; and I should be glad to hear any hon. Member get up and say that the report of Mr. Mott is true. Another extraordinary circumstance connected with this case is this: they never issued but one order to the Keighley union, and that was for its formation; and none of its proceedings were ever reported as unsatisfactory till an assistant commissioner was sent down only to find fault with it, and to draw up a report for the late Secretary of State. Now I come to another part of the proceedings. Before Parliament met again, Mr. Mott was dismissed, more than a year after he had been to Bolton. You kept him [*turning to Sir J. Graham*] till he had made his false report, and you got rid of him before Parliament met. I now come to 1844, when I made a speech in the town of Leeds. I said at Leeds that—

> "Sir J. Graham took steps to procure a report that was false, merely for the purpose of crushing a Member of the House of Commons, and dismissed the poor tool who had been the degraded and ignominious instrument in fabricating the report."

On the 26th of April, 1844, the right hon Baronet got up in the House, and said—

> "I have with the utmost diligence endeavoured to ascertain whether any communication, direct or indirect, passed between me and the assistant poor-law commissioner, Mr. Mott, as to the report used by me in debate; and I have been unable to find any trace of any such communication."

Why, I never said that any communication passed between the right hon. Baronet and Mr. Mott. At that time I was not aware that there were daily and confidential communications with Mr. Lewis, the Poor Law Commissioner, who had instructed his man to go down to my union. But a circumstance occurred which I will shortly bring before the House, which will justify me in my challenge to the right hon. Baronet.

> "I have endeavoured, also," the right hon. Baronet continues, "to find a trace of any communication on this subject between me and the Poor Law Commissioners, the central authority under which the assistant commissioners act, but I have been able to find none."

Now, let me ask the right hon. Baronet whether he kept a minute of the conversations between himself and Mr. Lewis at the Home Office, and of all hints, instructions, and directions he gave verbally to Mr. Lewis, for his guidance. I know he took too good care to do that. Mr. Chadwick, in his evidence, says—"I complained to Mr. Lewis, who was considered to be in most confidential communication with Sir J. Graham." Mr. Lewis himself says—"From conversations I had had with Sir J. Graham, I was led to believe" so and so. Why, it came out clearly before the Committee, from the evidence of those who "split" and turned traitors, that either Mr.

Lewis was the tool of the right hon. Baronet, or the right hon. Baronet was Mr. Lewis's tool. The late Secretary of State went on—

> "By my directions, the Poor Law Commissioners have searched their records to discover any instructions from them to Mr. Mott in reference to the Keighley union, and to the report of the 23rd of April, and I am authorized to say that they can find no record of any such instructions."

Mr. Lewis gave the House to understand that Mr. Mott's visit to Keighley was voluntary, of his own accord; and what will the House say when I tell them that Mr. Lewis has filed those very instructions, by which Mr. Mott was authorized to go down, as the groundwork of his action against me? Am I to be told now that these were voluntary visits? The country will say what it thinks of this. Here is a direct contradiction on the part of Mr. Lewis, in his examination before the Andover Committee. Either his original statement was not true, or Mr. Lewis has stated what was not true before the Andover Committee. Mr. Lewis said (Question 21,687)—

> "The Commissioners never, so far as I am aware, denied that they had instructed Mr. Mott to visit the Keighley union." The next question was, 'In fact, Mr. Mott did receive instructions from the board to go down?' The answer is, "I dare say he did.'"

And I will produce evidence to show that he did receive instructions. In answer to another question, Mr. Lewis says, he is unable to find certain documents; and I have evidence to show that documents have been destroyed at the office; and I believe that when the late Secretary of State for the Home Department denied that there existed any instructions given by the Poor Law Commissioners to Mr. Mott, they were then in existence at Somerset House. The right hon. Baronet said—

> "Further, I have been most anxious to ascertain whether any verbal directions were given by me to the Poor Law Commissioners. My own recollection does not lead me to think that any were given, and the recollection of the Poor Law Commissioners is explicit, that they received no such directions."

I do not believe that the right hon. Baronet saw all the Poor Law Commissioners; he saw only Mr. Lewis, and what passed between them will not be known till the day of judgment. I say in this place that there were directions. Why, as the House recollects, in 1842 I charged the right hon. Baronet, in this House, with Mr. Mott's being sent down to Keighley, and he did not then deny it, though he did in 1844. I am now going to read a document which is of the utmost importance to the vindication of my character; I refer to an affidavit made by a respectable gentleman, whom I never saw in my life till he volunteered to make an affidavit in my defence. Though opposed to me in politics, he said he could not stand by and see an honest Englishman trampled under foot. This gentleman, whose name is Barker, was in 1842 auditor of the Halifax union, and, having relinquished that office, the insurance company of Keighley, Bradford, and Halifax appointed him their agent. He, without any previous communication with me, except by writing to me to make the offer, made the following affidavit:—

> "Thomas Barker, of Halifax, in the county of York, maketh oath and saith, that he is now the agent of the Halifax, Bradford, and Keighley Insurance Company, but that he was previously the auditor of the Halifax Poor-Law Union, and held that office during the year 1842; that he has known Mr. Charles Mott for several years; that he was an assistant poor-law commissioner for the year 1842, and had the Halifax and Keighley unions under his superintendence during that year. That this deponent remembers the said Charles Mott inviting him to accompany him in his gig to Keighley from Halifax on the 13th day of April, 1842. That this deponent did accompany him. That as they drove to Keighley, the said Charles Mott informed him that he had received instructions to visit the Keighley union, and report upon the same. That deponent visited the said Charles Mott at the Haydock-lodge Lunatic Asylum (of which deponent believes that the said Charles Mott was part proprietor) about the time that the House of Commons voted the charge of William Busfeild Ferrand, Esq., M.P., against Sir James Graham calumnious and unfounded; and deponent says that he at that time heard the said Charles Mott declare that the statements of the said Sir James Graham, in the House of Commons, relating to the said Charles Mott's visit to the Keighley union on the 13th day of April, 1841, were false, and that the statements of the said William Busfeild Ferrand in the House of Commons were true, and that he had documents in his possession to prove this statement. And this deponent further says, that the said Charles Mott declared that he would publish the same, and prove the falsehoods of the said Sir James Graham, but that he was advised not to do so at that time, as another opportunity might occur when they would be more useful in vindication of his own character; and he further said, that he now believes the report was obtained for the purpose of being used by the said Sir James Graham in the House of Commons against the said William Busfeild Ferrand. And this deponent further says, that from the conversations which he has had with the said Charles Mott, he has never doubted, but always believed, that Sir James Graham issued, or caused to be issued, certain instructions to the said Charles Mott to visit and report concerning the said Keighley union."

Now this is a statement made upon oath

by a most respectable gentleman, who volunteered his evidence—by a gentleman whose character will bear the strictest scrutiny—and by a gentleman who has never been convicted in this House, or out of it, of falsehood. I have now nearly done, but I hope and trust the House will show their kind indulgence towards me, for an attempt has been made to destroy my character; and if it had not been for a most extraordinary circumstance—if it had not been for a quarrel in the office of the Poor Law Commissioners, I might have died with my character stained with fraud and falsehood, and those that came after me might have gone to their graves injured by the report, the evils of which the late Secretary of State for the Home Department wished to lay at my door. I now come to the dismissal of Mr. Day; but, previously, I must call the attention of the House to that portion of the right hon. Baronet's speech where he says—

> "I ought perhaps to add that it was not in my power to dismiss Mr. Mott; he was under the Poor Law Commissioners, and I distinctly assert that it was not in reference to this report that Mr. Mott's dismissal took place. There was a reduction of the assistant commissioners from ten to nine, and the Poor Law Commissioners decided that Mr. Mott should retire."

Mark, "it was not in my power to dismiss." Now, at this very time, a very providential circumstance—indeed I may say a most extraordinary circumstance—occurred, by which the late Secretary of State for the Home Department robbed the assistant poor-law commissioner of his situation, in order that he might give it to his friend Mr. Twisleton; and this too was done before the right hon. Baronet made his statement, just alluded to, in this House. Mr. Day, who was robbed of his situation by fraud and falsehood, and who, at the time he received the notice of his dismissal, was visiting the district, on the receipt of that notice wrote the following letter to the late Secretary of State for the Home Department:—

> "Shrewsbury, 23rd January, 1844.
>
> "Sir—I beg to transmit for your consideration the enclosed copies of correspondence between myself and the Poor Law Commissioners, on the subject of my resignation of the appointment which I held as assistant commissioner under them. I should not have troubled you in this matter but for the reasons I stated in the conclusion of my final communication to them, being impressed with the conviction that my dismissal (for it is useless to disguise it under any other name) must have originated in the report which the Commissioners of Inquiry have made on the subject of the Welsh disturbances. Should such have been the case, I have to request your serious attention to the observations with which I have accompanied my resignation, in the hopes that the question may be favourably reconsidered. In a case of such vital import to myself, I may perhaps be excused for observing, that as my resignation will reach Somerset House by the same post by which this is transmitted, I should esteem it a great and personal favour if you would request the Commissioners to delay the filling up my appointment, until you have had time to confer with them respecting it."

Now, listen to the reply of the late Secretary of State for the Home Department, for there is not one word of truth in it:—

> "Sir—I have the honour to acknowledge the receipt of your letter of the 23rd inst. I have to regret that you should be placed in the circumstances which you describe; but I beg to inform you that the Poor Law Commissioners alone exercise the powers of appointing or ceasing to employ their assistants: I do not interfere. A reduction of their establishment has been rendered imperative. I have conferred with them on the subject; they have selected you in the exercise of their own discretion, and I am not disposed to think it unsound. At the same time I must remark, that your ceasing to be an assistant poor-law commissioner in these circumstances, casts no stain on your character; it is in consequence of reduction; fault has not been imputed to you—I have, &c. "J. R. G. GRAHAM.
>
> "Whitehall, Jan. 25, 1844."

Thus the late Secretary of State for the Home Department sends forth that which robs Mr. Day of his situation, and by doing so robs also Mr. Day's family and home; but what will the House say when I tell them that the right hon. Baronet has interfered in these appointments, and that the statement about the Poor Law Commissioners alone exercising the power, is utterly untrue? Now, I will prove this out of the mouth of Mr. Lewis, and I will ask the right hon. Baronet if he is prepared to brand Mr. Lewis with infamy? For if he is not so prepared, I do not think the right hon. Baronet can clear himself. For this purpose I will read a portion of the examination of Mr. G. Lewis before the Andover Union Committee:—

> "MR. CHRISTIE: Can you explain in any way the statement made by Sir James Graham in a letter to Mr. Day, on the 25th of January—'A reduction of their establishment has been rendered imperative. I have conferred with them on the subject; they have selected you in the exercise of their own discretion, and I am not disposed to think it unsound?'—Yes; I will state to the Committee the explanation which Sir James Graham gave to me of the impression he was under when he wrote that letter. He stated to me that at the time when he wrote the letter, he was under the impression that a vacancy was to be made to readmit Mr. Twisleton into the commission, as assistant commissioner. Mr. Twisleton had been

appointed upon the Scotch Commission of Poor Law Inquiry by Sir James Graham, with an understanding that as soon as that commission ceased he was to resume his post at the Poor Law Commission. The Scotch Poor Law Commission ceased about this time, and Sir James Graham was extremely desirous that his promise should be strictly fulfilled.

"Whose promise?—Sir James Graham's promise. He told me that when he wrote this letter, he was under the impression that virtually there were ten assistant commissioners, and that a vacancy was to be made for Mr. Twisleton. Certainly the impression was an erroneous one; he must have written without an exact recollection of the facts in his mind.

"Was the letter written without any reference to the Commissioners?—The letter was not seen by the Commissioners before it was sent.

"Mr. S. Wortley: Was there any communication upon the subject of the letter with the Commissioners before it was sent?—No; I have no recollection of any.

"Mr. Christie: When was the explanation given to you by Sir James Graham?—Some time in the course of this Session; at the time the subject was mentioned in Parliament.

"Mr. S. Wortley: Did you confer with him before that about it?—No, I think not.

"Mr. Christie: When did you first become acquainted with this letter, written by Sir James Graham to Mr. Day, putting his resignation on the imperative necessity of a reduction?—At the time of the publication of Mr. Day's pamphlet.

"Did not you then ask Sir James Graham what he had meant, or how he had fallen into this mistake?—I do not recollect that Sir James Graham explained to me at that time what was the origin of his mistake. I saw he had made a mistake.

"Do you remember ever calling his attention to the mistake at the time?—I may have called his attention to the mistake, but I do not remember his giving me any explanation of it; at the same time I cannot say positively that I did call his attention to the circumstance.

"Have not you been in the habit of constant and confidential communication with Sir James Graham?—I have been in frequent communication with Sir James Graham.

"Did not you think that such a mistake as that made by Sir James Graham might involve him in difficulty?—Yes; at the same time I cannot say that I did point out the mistake to him, and I certainly do not recollect that he made any explanation of the cause of it to me before the present Session.

"Perhaps you were glad of sheltering yourself under Sir James Graham's reason?—No; because there was an inconsistency between his reason and the reason which the Commissioners had stated.

"When were you first aware of this promise made by Sir J. Graham to Mr. Twisleton?—I was aware of it at the time."

Here, then, I have proved that the right hon. Baronet made a distinct promise to Mr. Twisleton, but what that promise was he (the right hon. Baronet) has refused to tell. Could you [*said the hon. Member addressing Sir J. Graham*] not have rewarded him (Mr. Twisleton) without also robbing poor Day of his daily bread? I now come to one of the worst cases against the late Secretary of State for the Home Department, which is made evident from the following letter from Mr. Day:—

"Shrewsbury, April, 25, 1844.

"Sir—I beg to recall your attention to your communication of the 25th of January last, relative to the correspondence between the Poor Law Commissioners and myself. You therein state as follows:—

"'A reduction of their establishment has been rendered imperative. I have conferred with them on the subject; they have selected you in the exercise of their own discretion, and I am not disposed to think it unsound.'"

"At the end of the then quarter, viz., on the 31st of March, I accordingly transmitted my resignation as assistant commissioner. On the 5th of April, however (barely within the time that a communication of the fact could have been made to Dublin, and an answer received), Colonel Napier is gazetted 'Deputy Adjutant General for Ireland, *vice* Colonel Wade, who resigns;' and on the 18th of that month Colonel Wade is sworn in in my place.

"The 'reduction,' therefore, in the establishment of the Poor Law Commission which you have stated was imperative, had evidently no relation to any reduction in the number of the assistant commissioners. It can have been required only for other purposes, and those purposes now appear to have been the effecting a new distribution in the military arrangements of Ireland.

"That the direction for the reduction has proceeded from yourself, and that the discretion of the Commissioners was limited merely to the selection of the individual to be reduced, as fully proves that my dismissal resulted from no personal considerations unfavourable to myself, as your own admission, that 'you had conferred with them on the subject, and that fault was not imputed.'

"But the mere deprivation of an office which I was originally solicited to accept, and on account of which I have suffered inconvenient sacrifices, is not alone of what I complain. The way in which it has been effected, has been as ungenerous as unjust. It has been attempted to make it appear the result of incompetency on my part, and to colour the proceeding with the imputation of inefficiency. These are not words of course. No other ordinary meaning can be attached to the expression of the Commissioners, that the 'public service required my resignation,' and that 'their sense of public duty' compelled them to exact it.

"Surely, Sir, this is neither a manly nor even an honest mode of proceeding. It cannot have been sanctioned, much less have been suggested, by yourself. But still it is part of the same transaction; and I retire from the commission under an imputation against which even your own suggestion, that my removal is 'in consequence of reduction,' can be now no longer advanced.

"I beg then, once more, respectfully to ask you to reconsider the matter, to restore me, not to a commission, in which the very fact of my dismissal must disable me from acting with advantage, but at least to the position from which I have been displaced; to grant me some equivalent for the sacrifices I have made, and to prove by some further employment that the confidence of the Government is not withdrawn from me.

"I do not think it right to close this communication without mentioning that I have been in correspondence with the Duke of Wellington on the subject, having considered that so much of this transaction as has been connected with the War Office must have been under his cognizance.—I have, &c. "WILLIAM DAY."

So that on the very day when the right hon. Baronet came here to deny my charge against him, and when he said that it was not in his power to interfere with the Poor Law Commissioners, the right hon. Baronet had that very day received a letter from Mr. Day, charging him with saying that which was not true; and subsequently the right hon. Baronet came down to the House to repeat that which he had untruly stated to Mr. Day, with Mr. Day's letter lying at the Home Office. Here we have Mr. Day branding the late Secretary of State for the Home Department with having wilfully written to him a letter which was untrue, a letter which robbed him (Mr. Day) of his situation; and when such is the case, surely can any one say that such a course is just and proper? Can any honourable man say that this was a proper mode of proceeding? But what is the answer of the right hon. Baronet to Mr. Day's complaint? I will read it to the House:—

"Whitehall, April 27, 1844.

"Sir James Graham presents his compliments to Mr. Day, and has the honour to acknowledge the receipt of his letter of the 25th instant.

"The patronage of Sir James Graham is very limited, and he much regrets his inability to hold out to Mr. Day any expectation that it will be in his power to meet his wishes."

Now, if the right hon. Baronet could have produced the slightest reason for justifying the language he wrote to Mr. Day when he had robbed him of his situation, the right hon. Baronet would have alluded to what he had before written to Day, and have allowed that it was untrue. But poor Day was sacrificed for Colonel Wade! As to Colonel Wade's appointment, there is a most melancholy circumstance connected with it, whether bearing any relation or not to the matter of the appointment, I will not venture to express an opinion; but the fact is, that Colonel Wade not long after that appointment dropped down dead while visiting an union workhouse. The next quotation I shall make from the speech of the late Secretary of State for the Home Department, is that where he says—

"There was a reduction of the assistant commissioners from ten to nine, and the Poor Law Commissioners decided that Mr. Mott should retire."

That this was the case does not appear from the answers given by Mr. Lewis to the questions put to him by Mr. Christie, when before the Andover Union Committee. Mr. Christie asked—

"Was Mr. Mott's resignation, about which you have been asked, in pursuance of this Act of Parliament requiring the reduction to nine?—Yes; that is my recollection of it.

"Who succeeded Mr. Mott?—Mr. Clements.

"Then how did Mr. Mott's resignation make a reduction?—There were two assistant commissioners in the district for the time.

"Who were they?—Mr. Mott and Mr. Clements.

"When did Mr. Clements come over from Ireland?—It was some time in the summer of 1842, I think.

"When did Mr. Mott cease to be assistant commissioner?—He ceased to be an assistant commissioner at the end of the year 1842.

"While Mr. Mott and Mr. Clements were together in this district, were not there ten assistant commissioners?—There were.

"Did not Mr. Clements come over from Ireland for the express purpose of succeeding Mr. Mott?—He came over with the view of replacing Mr. Mott when Mr. Mott resigned.

"Till Mr. Clements came over from Ireland, there were only nine assistant commissioners in England, I presume?—No; I believe there were not.

"He came over for the express purpose of replacing Mr. Mott in his district, I understand from you?—Yes.

"He did succeed Mr. Mott?—Yes, he did.

"When he succeeded Mr. Mott, the number of assistant commissioners still remained nine?—Yes.

"Will you explain, then, how Mr. Mott's resignation was in pursuance of the reduction prescribed by that Act of Parliament, which was a reduction to nine?—It was in pursuance of it in this manner: at the time that the Act came into force there were ten assistant commissioners in England, and it was incumbent upon us to reduce that number to nine; we made that reduction by calling on Mr. Mott to resign."

And Mr. Lewis was cross-examined at considerable length on this point, and exceedingly closely too, but without shaking the question of Mr. Christie in the slightest degree. But a circumstance has occurred since this evidence was given, and rather a singular one—viz., that Mr. Lewis has added a note to explain away this portion of his evidence; and I want to know what right Mr. Lewis has, after undergoing an examination from the hon. Member for Weymouth, to go into his secret closet and add a note for the purpose of explaining away that examination? I will make one more extract from this evidence, and then I shall have done; and when the House have heard it, I do not think they will refuse my demand, but will grant my application for a Committee of Inquiry. The quotation to which I refer appeared in *The Times* of August 13, 1846, where the following answer of Mr. Lewis appears to a question from from Mr. Christie:—

> "Were there any peculiar reasons for calling upon Mr. Mott to resign? — The Committee will excuse my answering that question.
>
> "The room was then cleared for some time. On the re-admission of parties, the question was withdrawn."

Now as Mr. Lewis on that occasion requested the Committee to excuse his answering that question, will the late Secretary of State for the Home Department answer it? Will he tell us to-night what peculiar reasons there were for calling upon Mott to resign? Mr. Lewis says, "The Committee will excuse my answering that question." But I can answer that question. It was because Mr. Mott had drawn up a false report against me that they were obliged to get rid of him, to prevent him bringing up that which they (the Poor Law Commissioners) did not wish to be brought up in this House. But I have reason to ask that question still, and until it is explained to this House and to the country, I have a right to repeat that question. If, however, they are prepared to answer this question properly—if they have the courage to meet me fairly in the witness box—they will come into a court of justice, and be prepared to undergo a rigid examination, and honestly tell the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth; but if they do not do that, I shall retire from that court with my honour unstained, whilst they will leave it with infamy and disgrace. The hon. Member concluded by submitting his Motion to the House.

SIR J. GRAHAM: Sir, I came down to this House prepared to deal with the Motion put on the books by the hon. Member for Knaresborough, after considerable deliberation, embracing a large question of public policy, mixed up also with a personal accusation affecting myself; and under a notice—somewhat unusual—that it was the intention of the hon. Member for Knaresborough to allege against me a high crime and misdemeanor. I believed that such was the Motion which would be put from the chair, until the hon. Member undeceived me; and I feel, therefore, I shall best consult the convenience of the House, and not violate their wishes or their feelings, if I deal separately with that part of the case affecting myself personally, and do not enter into the other question of general policy. The hon. Member for Knaresborough, in the course of his speech, has departed from the terms of his notice; he has given up the question of general policy, and confined himself exclusively to a personal attack on me. Sir, I had thought that my retirement from the service of Her Majesty, and my return to the private station which I now occupy, and have occupied for many months, during which period I have observed the strictest silence—giving no cause of offence to any man; I had thought that these altered circumstances would have mitigated that bitter hostility with which the hon Member delights in pursuing me. I have been disappointed in that expectation. I know that the position of the hon. Gentleman is peculiar, and I make allowance for it. The hon. Member, indeed, lays claim to some indulgence, being under an indictment for a misdemeanor; and under these circumstances, as he himself most justly observed, all statements made by the party so indicted are to be received with peculiar allowance. I think it is only right to call the attention of the House to the circumstances under which the hon. Member has delivered his speech. I shall attempt, then, in my reply to that speech, to answer him deliberately and firmly, and I hope also temperately; but the topic is in no way new to this House; for it is that which the hon. Member for Shrewsbury designated, in 1842, as the "great Mott case." I will first call the attention of the House to the circumstances which led to the introduction of this topic. The allegation then made, and since reiterated, was, that I and one or more of the Poor Law Commissioners conspired to obtain a false report, for the purpose of injuring the hon. Member for Knaresborough in the performance of his Parliamentary duties. In 1842 the hon. Member for Knaresborough had not reduced the allegation into this substantive form; I shall, therefore, confine myself, first, to the report of Mr. Mott, and then to the report of Sir J. Walsham. The hon. Member has stated, that these reports were referred to a packed Committee; but, if I recollect rightly, the hon. and gallant Member for Marylebone pressed the hon. Member for Knaresborough, at the time, to insist on a Committee for testing these reports; but the hon. Member for Knaresborough did not then think it expedient to accede to the request; and, failing that suggestion, the hon. and gallant Member himself moved for a Committee of Inquiry. Now the first allegation that the hon. Member has made with respect to the Committee is, that it was a packed Committee. I will read the names of the Members, and the House will judge for itself. First, there was the hon. and gallant Member who moved for the Committee, Sir C. Napier; then the hon. Member himself, who, Sir, was a member of this Committee, which he now states to have been packed; who attended it, and who had ample opportunities of examining any witnesses whom he thought fit to call, and of cross-examining any witnesses to whom or to whose evidence he might have objections; and I must add, that Mr. Mott was called as a witness before that Committee: then came Dr. Nichol, Mr. Childers, Sir J. Pakington, Sir J. Trollope, Colonel Wood, Mr. Manners Sutton, Mr. W. Williams, Mr. Aldam, Mr. Grimsditch, Captain Pechell, Mr. Bolton Clive, Mr. Colville, and Mr. T. Duncombe. These Gentlemen were the members of that Committee — a Committee designated to-night by the hon. Member as a packed Committee. Now, Sir, having mentioned the names, let me read to the House what was the report of that Committee — a report which has been designated to-night as a trumped-up falsehood. Allow me to read to the House what is that report with respect to the two charges which the hon. Member has made. The hon. Member's first charge is, that the report of Mr. Mott is false. His second charge is, that Sir John Walsham's report is false. The report of the Committee tells us, separately, what is the character of these two reports of these gentlemen. It says, that the report of Mr. Mott has been borne out in all its important particulars by the evidence of all the witnesses who had been brought forward to contradict it. That is what the Committee said of Mr. Mott's report. With respect to Sir J. Walsham's report, the Committee declared that no attempt had been made to impugn its general accuracy; nor had it been impugned in its details, except in one or two trifling particulars. That was the report of the Committee, which the House were now told was a trumped-up falsehood. [Mr. FERRAND: I did not use that expression.] I took down the words at the time—I made a note of the expression, and I certainly thought the hon. Member had used it. [Mr. FERRAND: I said it was a trumped-up report. I did not use the expression trumped-up falsehood.] If the hon. Member retracts the expression, I will not insist on it. I am not here to quarrel with the terms in which the hon. Member indulges — I make allowance for his excitement; and whether he said the report of the Committee was a trumped-up report, or a trumped-up falsehood, matters little. Certainly the hon. Member said the Committee was a packed Committee; and I thought he meant to convey, that the Committee being packed, their report was false and unworthy of your confidence As to his assertion, that these reports of these two assistant commissioners were false—in that the hon. Member is directly opposed to the opinion of the Select Committee of which he himself was a member; and it is for the House to judge whether, with the excited feelings which the hon. Member has described as animating him, his account is to be received as correct; or whether the House will not rather give some credit to the report of their Committee, constituted, as I have stated, the hon. Member himself being one of the Committee — when he examined the witnesses, and had every opportunity of bringing forward the charges, in the presence of Mr. Mott, which he has now preferred, but which he then failed even to mention. So stood the case in 1842; and so it remained until 1844. In the spring of 1844, the hon. Member, at a public meeting held at Leeds, in a speech he made, thought fit to go one step further than he had gone in 1842. At that time he went no further than to state that Mr. Mott had made a false report; but, on the occasion referred to, the hon. Member went one step further still, and proceeded to allege that Mr. Lewis and I had conspired to obtain a false report from Mr. Mott, for the purpose of crushing him. Sir, on finding this charge made, I thought it my duty, in my place in Parliament, and in the presence of the hon. Member, to call the attention of the House to a declaration made by an hon. Member, so materially affecting, not only my personal honour, but the unstained purity of the office I had then the honour to hold in Her Majesty's service; and I denied, on my honour, the truth of the charge; using that mode of assertion which has been always regarded here—may it long continue!—as solemn as if an oath were taken by the Member making it. I offered the hon. Member every opportunity he could desire to substantiate his charge, if he adhered to it. The hon. Member, the House will recollect, on that occasion, utterly refused to submit to the jurisdiction of the House, demurred to this House as a fair tribunal to investigate a charge made by one hon. Member against another, and withdrew from the House, not retracting his charge, but declining to substantiate it by a Parliamentary inquiry. Now, Sir, it stands recorded in the Journals of this House, that the accusation made this night by the hon. Member, and which he then made, and which I think he has had an opportunity to prove, if it was possible to be proved—it stands recorded, I say, on the Journals of the House, that that accusation, in the opinion of this House, was unfounded and calumnious. On this part of the case, Sir, common candour will admit that the presumption at least is strongly in my favour. But though from time to time the hon. Member, after the solemn vote which had been thus recorded against him, has referred in his place as a Member of this House to these circumstances, preferring such reference to any attempt to prove his accusations—still he abstained for a time from repeating the original charges; but at length, in July or August I think, he boldly reasserted these charges, and at last ventured on a more substantive form of reiteration of them than he had ever made in the interval. The hon. Member in two letters which, he addressed to *The Times* newspaper, went a good deal further, and asserted more than in his oral charges he had hitherto ventured to affirm. Upon the appearance of these letters, Mr. Lewis, at once took the opinion of counsel on the question, whether those letters were not indictable? Sir, the hon. Member has stated, if I mistake not, on a former evening, that he wrote those letters from an eager desire to bring the point at issue to the test. But if the hon. Member had felt that eager desire, he would, I should suppose, have been ready to acknowledge himself the author of those letters. Now, I am much misinformed if, for three weeks after application was made to him to know if he was the author of these letters, the hon. Member did not avoid making any answer; and Mr. Lewis was consequently compelled to send specially his attorney to the hon. Member to put directly and orally to him the question as to the authorship of those letters; but even then when the question was put to him personally the hon. Member declined to answer till he had had an opportunity of coming to London; and it was not until two days after that personal application had been made to him, that he acknowledged that he was the author of those letters; and it was not until *The Times* had consented to produce the original letters, and thereby to prove that the hon. Member was the author of them, that the hon. Member acknowledged that he had written them. So much for bringing the question at issue to the test. Then a motion was made on the part of Mr. Lewis, before the whole Court of Queen's Bench, that a criminal information should be filed against the hon. Member. The hon. Member combated the proceedings for making absolute the rule *nisi*; he resisted to the utmost of his power, and at last the court decided that the rule against the hon. Member should be made absolute. And here I may observe that the affidavit which the hon. Member has very much relied on to-night was used in the Queen's Bench in the course of the last argument, on the rule *nisi*, when there was no possibility of making an answer to it, but it was used before the judges of the court; and nothing but the respect I bear for the even flow of justice, and the consideration that I should be highly culpable if I interfered in the slightest degree with the current of its administration, prevents me from citing to the House some of the observations that were made by the Lord Chief Justice, when he delivered the judgment of the court, that the rule must be made absolute. I will not read that judgment; but I may mention that I have filed a statement on oath—I have placed my affidavit on the files of the court, where it is open to traverse, contradiction, or answer—solemnly denying the truth of the charge that I was a party in any conspiracy whatever for the purpose of crushing the hon. Member. But the hon. Member says, that the real nature of these transactions will never be known until—I do not like to repeat the expression—until the day of judgment; but I assure him that before the day of judgment comes, and before a verdict is delivered, an opportunity shall be given to the hon. Member, of the most unexceptionable kind, for proving in the fullest manner what took place between Mr. Lewis and myself with respect to the whole affair. I am ready to appear as a witness in a court of law, and to be examined on every portion of these transactions, so far as I have been concerned in them. Sir, I court that inquiry; and having made this declaration, and considering that this matter is pending in a court of law, and that Mr. Lewis entered into security to proceed with the information three or four days before the Session began, though I am not indisposed to give the hon. Member any advantage he may wish for, I think, nevertheless, that to enter in this House into details on this matter on which I may be summoned to give evidence as a witness in a court of law, would be a course that would be quite inconsistent with a proper regard for the pure administration of justice. Under these circumstances, I hope the House is satisfied that my conduct with respect to Mr. Mott has not been what the hon. Member has described it to be; and I assure the House I am not unprepared to give the fullest information in my power, at the proper time and before the proper tribunal. Still the hon. Member has dwelt upon some points on which I wish to offer a few words. The hon. Member said, " Where is the honour of Mr. Lewis ?" I say, that Mr. Lewis has taken a step to vindicate that honour, and taken that step which the hon. Member says he most desired. The hon. Member has appealed unto Cæsar—"unto Cæsar thou shalt go." Mr. Lewis has appealed to a court of law to say, whether he has in any respect departed from the honour and honesty that ought to distinguish a servant of the Crown ; and whether that which has been pronounced by this House a false and calumnious charge when directed against me, be not, according to the verdict of a jury of his countrymen, in the case of Mr. Lewis, a false, foul, and indefensible libel. There is another case on which I should wish to make a remark ; I refer to the case of Mr. Jenkin Jones, who pleaded guilty to a charge of having bartered a public office for some corrupt consideration. Now, the hon. Member has not hesitated to introduce a passage from the evidence taken before the Andover Union Committee, in which Her Majesty's present Attorney General appears to have expressed, at the trial of Mr. Jones, an opinion of me which is more remarkable for its brevity and for its severity than for its courtesy. But, allowing for the latitude of expression used by counsel, and for the irritation of the moment under defeat, I should be most unwilling to attach any importance to an opinion so pronounced. I regard it as the effect of an impetuous temperament giving frank expression to angry feelings. But, passing from this, I may mention that I did act on that occasion upon the advice of the then law officers of the Crown, of my ever-lamented Friend, the late Sir W. Follett, and my hon. and learned Friend sitting below me (Sir F. Thesiger). I cannot detail to the House, for I do not know, what passed between this person (Mr. Jones) and his immediate employers, the Poor Law Commissioners; but that which came to my knowledge was, that he had been proved guilty of having corruptly trafficked in the appointment to a public office. This was acknowledged by the party accused ; and, regardless of every other consideration, I declared that I thought he ought to be brought up for judgment. The court having sentenced him to a year's imprisonment, I think I should have ill discharged my duty to the Crown, in the case of a public servant who was convicted of having corruptly bartered a public office, if I had advised the Crown to remit that punishment—at least before a large portion of it had been suffered. I should, I think, have betrayed my duty, if I had advised any remission of the punishment before eight months' imprisonment at least had been suffered. As to that case, I can say that I advised Her Majesty, as a Minister of the Crown, without favour or affection, to do that which I considered would be most conducive to justice. I acted, if I may be permitted to say so, with perfect indifference, and what I did was altogether founded on a consideration of my bounden duty as the responsible adviser of Her Majesty. I now wish shortly to explain a matter to which I have already referred in my place here, and to which the hon. Member has again called attention tonight. I speak with reference to a question which the hon. Member for Finsbury put to me at the close of the Session of 1845, with regard to the practice of bone-crushing in the Andover union workhouse. The question was first put, I believe, by the hon. Member for Finsbury within a week of the close of that Session. I directed immediate inquiry to be made into the matter. The person employed to make that inquiry by the Poor Law Commissioners was Mr. Parker, who happened at that time to be the assistant commissioner to whose district the Andover union belonged. I think I am accurate that the interview between me, Mr. Parker, and one of the Poor Law Commissioners, Sir E. Head, took place on the morning before the prorogation, or the day but one before the prorogation. It was, therefore, all but impossible for me to present to the House Mr. Parker's written report before the prorogation of Parliament. It has been said that I wished to suppress that report. Now, the suppression of that report was not within my power; because, being made to the Poor Law Commissioners, it was on the records of their office, and therefore its suppression by me was impossible. But I did think then, and I think now, that the production of that report on the last day of the Session, when no explanation of it could be given, and no mitigating circumstances could be stated, and to have allowed it to have gone forth to the public in the absence of the explanations which ought to have been simultaneously promulgated, would have been unfair; and I was on that ground led to form the resolution to which I came, not to present the report to the House at that time, but to give the verbal explanation to the hon. Member which I did give on the last day of the Session. In that I may have committed an error of judgment; but I am sure that I acted from a regard to my duty as a public servant. And then a Gentleman, in the public service, acting under the order of his superiors, and confidentially communicating with the Secretary of State, says he takes a note of what took place, and that note is used eight months after the conversation took place by an hon. Member in his place in this House. That note pretends to be an accurate account of what took place. Now, I speak from memory only, without any such memorandum to refer to; but I think there are expressions in that note attributed to me which I did not use. I leave the House to judge in the matter. Sir, something has been said as to my not having courted examination before the Andover Union Committee. The fact is, I remained in London for about three weeks after my resignation of office. The Committee might have summoned me; it was not for me to tender myself as a witness. If any statements or explanations had been made to the Committee by other witnesses, which were not perfectly satisfactory to them, I was all that time ready, at a moment's notice, to have attended them; and I should then have given to them the same account of these transactions which I have now given to the House. The House, therefore, will not, I trust, draw any unfavourable inference against me because I was not examined as a witness before the Andover Union Committee. With respect to the report of Mr. Mott on the Bolton case, I certainly have no very distinct recollection of the circumstances of that case; but I do remember the hon. Member for Bolton making a statement in this House respecting the distress prevailing in the year 1841 among a portion of his constituents, and I believe that it was in his capacity as assistant commissioner that Mr. Mott made that inquiry. I had every reason at that time to think that that report was strictly accurate; but statements were made in this House which certainly did throw a certain degree of doubt on that report; and on the Poor Law Commissioners making the reduction from ten to nine assistant commissioners, although I certainly can say that in the distribution of their patronage, neither directly nor indirectly have I ever interfered, yet on that reduction being made, the Poor Law Commissioners may have confidentially stated that which led them to prefer to part with one rather than another of those assistant commissioners. It was certainly not at my instance that any one of the assistant commissioners has been dismissed. I now come to the case of Mr. Clements. With respect to Mr. Clements, the matter has been already debated in this House. The noble Lord at the head of the Government took part in that debate, and only six Members in a very full House joined with the hon. Member in thinking that there was any one imputation resting on Mr. Clements. I rely upon the opinion of the overwhelming majority of the House against the hon. Member, who then had, unfortunately, only six Members willing to vote with him, and who this evening found it very difficult, I think, to find a single Member disposed to second his Motion. It remains only for me to notice the case of Mr. Day. The House will bear in mind, that towards the end of the year 1843, the Commission which had been appointed to inquire into the state and causes of the disturbances in South Wales made their report, and it was quite obvious that among the circumstances which had led to those disturbances the administration of the poor law was one of the most prominent causes. Now, I must observe, that it is one thing to impute blame, and another to take precautions that the management to be adopted shall be such as to cause a good feeling towards the administrators of the law in delicate and difficult circumstances. But, there was some imputation on the administration, and I thought that it would be advantageous if there were some change in the South Wales poor-law district. I communicated that opinion to the Commissioners at the end of December, 1843, and the moment I heard that there was likely to be an opening for a Commissioner who would exercise superior discretion and ability, the position of Mr. Twisleton was brought to my recollection. It was at my request that he had relinquished one of the most important and beneficial situations under the Commission — that of assistant commissioner for the metropolitan district; and he did so at my particular intreaty, and for the benefit of the public service. My right hon. Friend below me (Sir R. Peel) will remember the eminent services and the great assistance which Mr. Twisleton rendered to the public in the year 1842. The hon. Member has thought fit to impute to Mr. Twisleton some corrupt proceedings with respect to the town of Paisley; but I have never heard before of any such imputation. I only know, that under the most difficult circumstances, he, with exemplary fidelity, discharged the difficult duties allotted to him. Mr. Twisleton was no political friend of mine: he was appointed by the noble Lord opposite, when his Friends were formerly in power; and it was only my conviction of his merit, after seeing his fidelity and his ability in the execution of very difficult duties, that led me to impose upon him the difficult task of an inquiry into the poor law in Scotland. I have already said that he then held a most advantageous position; I asked him, for the public good, to give up that situation, and to go into Scotland to perform a most confidential and disagreeable duty. There was the greatest uncertainty whether he would be able to resume his position; but I gave him an assurance on my part, that when the opportunity occurred, he should not be overlooked. When, therefore, I saw that owing to the change in the Welsh district there was likely to be an opening, I did ask the Poor Law Commissioners to remember Mr. Twisleton. It appeared, however, that the business in Scotland required him to remain till Easter; and it was subsequently the wish of Mr. Twisleton, at the expiration of his period of service in Scotland, to take a tour abroad. The Poor Law Commissioners were intimately acquainted from past experience with the merits of the late Colonel Wade, and in the exercise of the discretion vested in them by law they did remove Mr. Day, and did appoint Colonel Wade. Now, Sir, I really do not think that I have omitted a single point in the long and protracted speech of the hon. Member; and I hope and believe that I have not been betrayed into a single angry expression with reference to this subject. I repeat that the matter of the conspiracy, by obtaining false reports, to crush the hon. Member, cannot rest in its present state. Fortunately an appeal has been made to the right tribunal; there, and there only, can I enter into the fullest explanation on that particular point with respect to Mr. Mott, which the hon. Member has again raised; and there I shall be ready to appear to give that more full explanation, which my sense of duty prevents me here from giving.

Dr. BOWRING said, that as reference had been made to a case in which he had taken part, he would state the facts, which were very simple. In the year 1841, he had called the attention of the House to the extreme suffering which afflicted the community he represented; and he had made a statement which had undoubtedly induced the right hon. Baronet to say that if such a state of things existed in the borough of Bolton he ought to institute an immediate inquiry. That inquiry was instituted, and Mr. Mott was the commissioner sent down to conduct it. Certainly that gentleman did not conduct the inquiry in a manner to satisfy him or his constituents. They thought that he had not made the inquiries he ought, that he had not seen the individuals he ought to have seen, and that he had not examined the parties he ought to have examined. The papers were printed by the House, and showed that the duties had been very unsatisfactorily discharged by Mr. Mott. He had, undoubtedly, made complaint of that circumstance; he was not aware that he had made any representation to the right hon. Baronet; but he did make a representation to the Secretary of the Poor Law Commissioners, that nothing could do more discredit to the Poor Law Commissioners than their conduct in the matter of Mr.

Mott. Of Mr. Mott he had heard nothing for a long time after, nor until the right hon. Baronet (Sir J. Graham) had appealed to him as being acquainted with the circumstances of his (Mr. Mott's) dismissal; and he certainly thought that the dismissal of Mr. Mott was an admission that his (Dr. Bowring's) statements were true, and that Mr. Mott's representations were not; and he thought that what the right hon. Baronet said upon that occasion had put him in the situation in which a Member ought to stand with his constituents and the public, and that the dismissal of Mr. Mott recognised the truth of his (Dr. Bowring's) assertions.

Mr. DISRAELI: As the two principal speakers in this debate have done me the honour of referring to my opinions on this subject, I hope the House will allow me again to touch the "great Mott case," to which the right hon. Baronet the Member for Dorchester has alluded. On the present occasion, as upon the last—which I believe will be nearly three years ago—I have not had the advantage of any previous conference with my hon. Friend the Member for Knaresborough. The Resolutions were shown to me when I entered the House; I was then told that my hon. Friend had made up his mind to withdraw the latter part of them; and in that respect I do not think there is any difference of opinion as to his discretion. I am bound to say, that upon the subject generally I have formed an opinion very different from that of my hon. Friend the Member for Knaresborough. I have endeavoured before briefly to explain that general opinion; and, having since been a member of the Andover Committee, I am, perhaps, not the less qualified from forming a judgment upon it. The House should never forget the circumstances of this case, and the subject with which they are connected. The great change in the law of Elizabeth, with respect to the maintenance of the poor, which has occurred in our time, is a subject constantly before the public for national criticism and for political modification. It is impossible to deny that it is one of those subjects on which public opinion should be viewed with indulgence, and on which the public expression of the opinions of public men ought not to be looked upon captiously, especially of those public men who took up opinions which were unpopular in this House, who were unconnected with any party in the House, and who if they went into a division, would have gone into a sorry division; such as that to which the right hon. Baronet the late Secretary of State for the Home Department referred in a spirit so constitutional, but in which, seeing his present position, he may some day find himself. The poor-law question, is a question of charity, and we ought to look charitably upon all discussions connected with it. Let me take the position of the right hon. Gentleman himself. He was a distinguished country gentleman before he held any office in Her Majesty's Government. He formed a decided opinion upon an economic and most important question. Whether that opinion were right or wrong, if men had not taken it up, the great change would not have taken place. I therefore always, from the first, believed that the right hon. Gentleman, as a country gentleman, or as a distinguished Minister, was, upon this subject, entirely sincere. He thought this great change was necessary. He was a member of the Committee, the report of which recommended this change. He supported it with great ability when it was introduced; he very naturally supported it when he became a Minister of the Crown, not only as the representative of philosophical and political convictions, but as a man does when invested with power. He was determined that the change should be carried into effect; and he was determined to uphold it when it became the law. In that I see nothing but conviction and sincerity of conduct. But there are always two opinions upon the same subject; and when we see a man like my hon. Friend the Member for Knaresborough—not brought into power by a great party, but supported by the sympathies of his neighbours, who are opposed to this law—who is a man of honest convictions—who, whatever may be alleged against him, speaks out of this House, as I know, whatever others may think, what he says in it—when we see my hon. Friend coming to this House, and opposing himself to the opinions of the majority, although they think him outrageously in error, I do say that opinions upon this subject uttered by such a man, should be received with indulgence, perhaps even with kindness. As to this particular case, I do not agree with my hon. Friend the Member for Knaresborough. I see two sincere individuals, the one a right hon. Gentleman, recently a Secretary of State, who is attacked; the other, the hon. Member for Knaresborough, who is to be punished. Those two individuals represent opposite opinions; but I cannot help remembering that the one has been a powerful Minister, supported by a powerful party, and the other is an isolated individual, who has had no party to support him; whose only solace and whose best reward has been the sympathies of people out of doors. Under these circumstances, I think it would have been just to have viewed the conduct of the Minister, whoever he might be, who had to carry this law into effect, with anything but a captious spirit. So also do I think that the individual who opposed the Minister of that particular administration of the law, should not be held up as a person whose conduct ought always to be impugned, and whose motives always maligned. With respect to what the right hon. Gentleman said in his chief answer, or rather reason for not giving an answer, to the charge of my hon. Friend, that this was not a proper tribunal where this case ought to be settled, I entirely agree with him; but let me ask the House where was this question first originated? Was it before the Lord Chief Justice of England, to whom the right hon. Gentleman appeals? No! Let us not forget the remarkable circumstances under which a solitary Member was brought before the self-appointed tribunal of this Assembly. You had then an individual the most powerful Minister that England has seen for a century, and who might have remained the most powerful Minister, had he not, as Hippocrates says, in one of his chapters in which he accounts for madness, been placed in those circumstances in which "too much prosperity may make a man insane;" you had that powerful Minister, with that devoted phalanx—that Macedonian army, ready to vote according to his nod—arrayed against this solitary being, who chose to express what might be erroneous, but were his honest and profound convictions. Had he the chance which any man in the House of Commons, whatever his politics may be, generally has? Could he appeal to a generous Opposition to support him? On the contrary, the Opposition at that time mainly consisted of a particular and predominant interest, which, whether right or wrong, this individual had peculiarly offended. You were at that moment virtually governed by the manufacturing party in this House. Between the Government of that day and that particular interest, there was, though not announced, a virtual alliance. Many there were, who, in giving a vote against the Member for Knaresborough, remembered they were punishing the denunciator of "Devil's dust." These were the circumstances under which the House came to a resolution which still remains upon our Journals; but, I say, not to the dishonour of the hon. Member for Knaresborough, but to the discredit of the House of Commons. Such language, in such a form, ought to be kept for high criminals. You should not punish a man in his position for idle words. When I turn to your Journals, and see a man expressing his convictions upon a subject of great national interest, because he may express himself against one of the most powerful individuals in the country in language too strong, denounced by a resolution of the Commons of England, I cannot say it will be for your historic reputation; I doubt whether it will tell for your political courage. And now you come forward again and say, this question has been settled by a decision of the House, and that it is finally to be adjudicated upon by another tribunal. The main fact I do not deny. I cannot conceive for a moment that my hon. Friend the Member for Knaresborough could possibly have supposed that under the present circumstances the House of Commons could have interfered in his favour; and I take it as a confirmation of that opinion, that my hon. Friend did not consult me on the subject, because, if he had, I should have told him that it was totally impossible, in the present state of this question before the Court of Queen's Bench, to appeal to the House of Commons. The right hon. Gentleman stops the question at once. But I take it, after what has passed, there will be no delay in the decision. I take it also, after what the right hon. Gentleman stated, that not only himself will appear in the witness-box, but Mr. Lewis also. I will not notice the minor points of this case; such as what the right hon. Gentleman said about Mr. Twisleton. That point he seems to admit. It appears to me that however you regard this case, it ends all in the conduct of one—I should be sorry to use harsh language towards any one who is absent, or under affliction, but I say one—disreputable individual. It is "Mr. Mott said this," "Mr. Mott wrote that." He is ready to swear that the Minister of the Crown engaged him to do that which that Minister says he was not engaged to do; and he is ready to swear that he was engaged to do something, whilst the hon. Member alleges the contrary. Then we have a right to ask, is the word of the right hon. Member for Dorchester worth more than the word of Mr. Mott? I must say I prefer the word of the right hon. Gentleman to that of Mr. Mott; but saying that sincerely, I think I may also say, I prefer the word of the hon. Member for Knaresborough to that of Mr. Mott. Mr. Mott, the poor-law guardian, or Mr. Mott, the keeper of a madhouse, is not a person entitled to the gratuitous admiration of mankind. But what, after all, is this to the House of Commons? Why this scandalous House of Commons' quarrel? The entry of these things on the Journals, does not tend to elevate the character of this House. It is a House of Commons' quarrel, which has arisen from misconception, misunderstanding—from awakened prejudices and heated passions, which must exist in popular assemblies. How painful that the Lord Chief Justice of England must come forward to vindicate the honour of one of our chief statesmen, or even to punish the honest and hon. Member for Knaresborough, who thinks all this time sincerely that he has been fighting the cause of the people! We are told that this question is to be settled by the Court of Queen's Bench. No doubt, if the knot be worthy of the divinity, the question will soon be solved. But be that as it may, I cannot but feel that the decision of any court of justice, though it may substantiate the truth, will not elevate our character in the opinion of our constituents. I rose, however, to express my hope—to which I am sure my hon. Friend will respond—that after the speech of the right hon. Gentleman, and the fair challenge he made, he will not ask the House of Commons to come to any decision upon this question.

Mr. ROEBUCK: I think there has been a slight misconception of the real merits of this case. In spite of the philosophical reasons and the deep research of the hon. Gentleman who has just spoken, I think there is not a very true conception of this matter. It strikes me that it comes before this House in a very small form. A Member of the House of Commons charges a Minister of the Crown with corrupting and suborning an inferior officer, and sending him into the country in order to fabricate a false report to destroy the character of a Member of this House; and then we are told this ought never to have come before this House. The hon. Gentleman says that this subject is one of the most important economical considerations of the Government. I should like to know whether the hon. Gentleman, although he used half a dozen words when one would suffice, did not mean to say that this is a very important subject for the consideration of the Government of this country, and particularly as regards the poor. I am willing to take the matter as he represents it. It is the administration of a very unpopular law which the hon. Gentleman described, or rather did not describe, for he talked only in vague generalities, of an unpopular law affecting great interests in this country; and, among others, the great body of our poor countrymen. The application of this law is said to be corrupt—basely corrupt—by a Minister of the Crown, so as to bear unjustly upon the poor of this country. I want to know whether the House of Commons is not the place in which such a charge should be entertained? If a Minister of the Crown is guilty of such base conduct, is it not a subject for us to entertain? Is it not our special mission to protect the poor against such proceedings—I use the words "base proceedings"—on the part of any Minister of the Crown? The right hon. Gentleman was so charged by the hon. Member for Knaresborough. The House of Commons takes it up. That Macedonian phalanx, which the hon. Gentleman chose to mark with the finger of scorn, voted upon that resolution *nemine contradicente*, stating that the charge was calumnious against a Minister of the Crown. The hon. Gentleman himself who speaks of that Macedonian phalanx was one of those who so voted. ["No!"] At the time to which the hon. Member for Shrewsbury refers, he sat behind the Minister—that powerful Minister at whose beck and call the Macedonian phalanx, now rendered so memorable, was prepared to act. People shook their heads, but that would not alter the state of the facts.

Mr. DISRAELI: I spoke in favour of my hon. Friend the Member for Knaresborough. The Speaker upon that occasion did not see the hon. Member for Lincoln rise, and, therefore, it did happen that I had no opportunity of voting, because in fact there was not any formal division; but I certainly intended to vote as I have stated, and I should have so voted if the Motion had been pressed.

Mr. ROEBUCK resumed: This is not the first time the hon. Member for Shrewsbury has spoken one way and voted another. What I look at is this: I see recorded upon the Journals of this House a Resolution, setting forth that an hon. Member has uttered a calumnious observation upon a Minister of the Crown, a Secretary of State; and I find the hon. Member for Shrewsbury saying, that he intended to vote against that resolution. Now, I venture to affirm, that if a question be put, and that I intend to vote against it, I should take care that the House did not separate until I should acquire an opportunity of recording my vote. We all know that the accusation brought against the Secretary of State was a false and calumnious charge. But no matter what subject may come under discussion in this House, there are men who will twist and turn it to their own purposes: these I call men of one idea. The currency will occupy exclusively the mind of one man; this quarrel between the hon. Member for Knaresborough and the right hon. Member for Dorchester may for a time fill the thoughts of another; but the conduct of the late Prime Minister is the leading idea with the hon. Member for Shrewsbury: he cannot help bringing into every discussion his old favourite topic, censure and condemnation of the right hon. Baronet who recently was at the head of the Government. This one idea he drags into every discussion; and whenever he gets up, be the occasion what it may, he never can sit down till he has had a fling at the right hon. Baronet. This figure of the Macedonian phalanx—his most recent, yet not his most happy effort—is one which cannot fail to remind all who heard the hon. Member of this material fact, that the hon. Member himself was in that phalanx for a time one of the most faithful and devoted followers of the right hon. Baronet; that with him and for his support the hon. Member's spear was levelled, and his shield locked; that he firmly maintained his position so long as danger did not impend, but the moment that any ground for serious apprehension arose, he instantly ran over to the enemy's camp. It therefore ill became the hon. Member for Shrewsbury to talk as he has done of the phalanx to which he himself belonged.

Mr. NEWDEGATE: It appears to me that the hon. and learned Member for Bath, either Quixotically takes upon himself to avenge every wrong, or, in his legal capacity, to pronounce an opinion upon the law of every case. This subject will finally be decided in the Court of Queen's Bench; but that does not prevent the hon. and learned Member from pronouncing an opinion upon it, nor does the peculiar turn of his own mind preclude him from accusing others of being always under the influence of a leading idea. He thought the right hon. Baronet the late head of the Government a great authority upon one great system; and he thought that with the hon. Member for Shrewsbury the leading idea is enmity to the late head of the Government: what foundation is there for statements of this kind? I can assure the hon. Member for Bath, that the course which he takes in public is as little qualified as anything well can be, to impress upon the mind of this House, or on that of the community at large, the opinion that he is in public the same kindly-disposed and honourable man that I have reason to believe he is understood to be in private life.

Lord J. RUSSELL: The hon. Member for Shrewsbury has told us that just as he was coming into the House he learned that the hon. Member for Knaresborough had abandoned one moiety of his resolution; and I am sure it was quite apparent, from the speech of the hon. Member which the House has just heard, that if the other moiety were to be dispensed with, the hon. Member for Shrewsbury would have been equally well pleased, and would have thought the forbearance of his hon. Friend, whom he now supports, equally judicious. I confess that for my part I never knew a Motion less to the purpose—less applicable to the business that has really been brought before the House. The hon. Member for Knaresborough has brought forward a Motion compounded of various questions which have been already decided by this House. The merits of those questions have already been stated over and over again. The grounds upon which proceedings connected with them rest, have been already deliberately considered; and the House has arrived at an almost unanimous decision respecting the charges that have been brought against the late Secretary of State and the Poor Law Commissioners, imputing to them that they conspired to produce a false report for the purpose of imposing upon Parliament. The hon. Member for Bath says truly, that that was an almost unanimous vote of this House. So far then as the House is concerned, the whole question has been disposed of; and there appears to me to be a peculiar impropriety in now bringing it forward here, inasmuch as we all know that the question has been formally brought before a court of law, and the future decision of it cannot be made a breach of privilege. The case was fully heard by the House; and the House came to a decision upon all the facts. With such grounds only in his possession, or accessible to him, it does not seem to me that the hon. Gentleman was entitled to eke out his invective by the assistance of documents which were brought under the consideration of the Committee appointed to inquire into the case of the Andover union. Now, in making this Motion, and in bringing forward those documents once more, the hon. Member has by no means succeeded in showing us why there should be any further inquiry. There is, however, one observation, which cannot fail to strike the mind of every one with reference to all the points under consideration, namely, that the hon. Member was not entitled to use Mr. Coode for two purposes. When he quoted Mr. Coode as an authority, he read a letter from him, impugning the conduct of the Poor Law Commissioners; and next he referred to the misconduct of Mr. Coode, as proof that the Commissioners are to blame. The hon. Member can scarcely be allowed to quote Mr. Coode both ways. The House, I am sure, must feel as I do, that, at the inquiry before the Committee on the Andover Union case, an officer, subordinate to the Poor Law Commissioners, did not act with that fidelity which the Government and the public had a right to expect. I must say I do not understand how the business of the Home Office, or that of any other department, can be carried on, if under-secretaries are to behave in similar cases in the manner which the gentleman employed by the Poor Law Commissioners has behaved. With this brief reference to the subject, I dismiss all the charges founded upon the evidence given by that subordinate officer. As to the poor law itself, whether it were a wise measure or an unwise measure—whether it were merciful, or whether it were tyrannical, even if it were the most cruel law that ever was passed—nothing remained for the right hon. Baronet the Member for Dorchester, being then Secretary of State, but to carry out the existing law. He was bound to act fairly under it; and I fully believe that he did act fairly in the administration of the powers intrusted to him under that statute. In saying this, however, I am quite ready to assume that the hon. Member for Knaresborough is as perfectly sincere as the hon. Member for Shrewsbury represents him to be; but it does not follow that because of his sincerity we are to support him in bringing forward accusations in this House, imputing corrupt conduct to public functionaries who exercise great trusts. I think the evidence published on the subject has been decisive with the House and the country.

Sir R. PEEL: I certainly had no wish whatever to take any part in the present discussion; and I considered that it would be more dispassionately disposed of in that other place to which I understand it is now to be referred. I, therefore, should not have risen had the hon. Member for Shrewsbury not said that I had exercised the power with which I lately was intrusted, for the purpose of doing an individual wrong. I hope if any one believes that charge to be well founded, that he will refer to the record of those transactions, and from the ascertained facts of the case decide if I ever made use of the power which I possessed to do any wrong whatever to the hon. Member, or to any other person. The hon. Member for Shrewsbury says that the hon. Member for Knaresborough preferred a charge against the Secretary of State, and that I, for the purpose of crushing an independent Member, exercised the influence which he supposed then to have been at my command. This I rise to deny, and to invite those who entertain any doubt upon the subject, to examine the evidence. But another charge has been made: it is said that the hon. and learned Member for Beverley, as chairman of a Committee appointed to try the merits of a controverted election, was induced by the Secretary of State, not only to influence the proceedings of that Committee, but that the Secretary of State procured a false report from that Committee, through the agency of the hon. and learned Member for Beverley, to be presented to this House. The hon. Gentleman accused that hon. Baronet with having conspired, contrary to his oath, with the right hon. Baronet. Here are the words:—

> "That Mr. Hogg, the Member for Beverley, and a Member of this House, as Chairman of a Committee to try and determine a petition from Nottingham, complaining of the return for that city, had aided Sir James Graham in unseating Mr. Walter."

That is the second charge. It accuses the Secretary of State with having prevailed on Sir J. W. Hogg to violate the sacredness of an oath—to do what? To give an unjust decision in removing Mr. Walter from this House. These charges were noticed not by me; but it was asked whether or not the object of these charges which had been so preferred would remain silent under them? The hon. Member for Beverley came forward, and my right hon. Friend also came forward, and indignantly denied the charge. It then became my duty, holding the position which I then filled, to give advice to the House; for who ever held my situation as a Minister of the Crown, to whom the House did not look to originate and advise proceedings under such circumstances? If any hon. Gentleman will refer to the record of those proceedings, he will observe that I advised the House to act with the greatest caution. First, I advised the House, when the charges were first preferred, to come to no decision whatever at that time. I advised delay. I know that many persons thought that delay was unnecessary; but I was most anxious that the hon. Gentleman should do that which it appeared to me at the time certain that he would do—that he would at once admit that the charges were unfounded, or else that he would attempt to sustain them. Instead of that, however, the hon. Gentleman repeated the charges, but declined to sustain them. I again advised the House to pause, that the hon. Gentleman might have notice given him to appear. A second delay accordingly took place; and when the hon. Gentleman did appear, he repeated his charges, declined to substantiate them, but expressed his determination to adhere to them. There was then, in my opinion, no other course open to the House of Commons to pursue, than to pronounce an opinion on what had taken place. It appeared to me that the Secretary of State would subject himself to almost universal reprobation, and certainly to the reprobation of this House, if he were left open to the charge of having interfered with a gentleman occupying the situation of a Chairman of a Committee and a Member of this House, and having induced him to violate his conscience and his oath, in order to effect the exclusion of a Member of this House. It became then my duty, the hon. Gentleman having declined alike to retract or to substantiate his charges, to move these resolutions. I believe the noble Lord the Member for Newark (Lord J. Manners) did intend to dissent from those resolutions; but he abandoned that intention. I must at the same time say, that so far from these resolutions having been passed in consequence of the exercise of any power I might have over those with whom I was then connected, although two or three Members of this House might be inclined to dissent from them, I do not believe any resolutions ever passed this House which carried with them more of the universal assent of the House. So far from there being any vindictive feeling with regard to the hon. Member for Knaresborough, my firm belief is, that there was scarcely a Member of this House who did not wish to be relieved from the position in which he was placed, by the hon. Gentleman himself coming forward and relieving us from the necessity of passing the resolutions, by retracting the charge he had made, or by endeavouring to substantiate it. These were the circumstances under which I proposed the resolutions to which reference has been made; and if the hon. Gentleman did intend to prefer any charge against me of using any power I possessed to his prejudice, I am sure the feeling of the House, after the statement I have made, will be that I am blameless.

Mr. CHRISTIE: I am anxious to be allowed to make one or two observations before the close of this debate; and even if the right. hon. Gentleman opposite (Sir J. Graham) had not alluded to the subject to which I am about to refer, I should have taken the opportunity of saying what I am now about to state. One or two other points have been adverted to in the course of the debate, on which I wish to make a few observations; but I can assure the House I shall do so very briefly, as I am suffering from illness, which precludes me from occupying their attention for more than a few moments. The right hon. Baronet opposite has to-night complained of the production, by me, of a memorandum of a conversation between himself, Sir E. Head, and Mr. Parker, without his having received any previous notice of my intention to produce such a document. The right hon. Gentleman made the same complaint at the time I produced the memorandum; and if I had then thought as I now think, I should then have said what I am anxious now to say—that I ought to have given the right hon. Baronet notice of my intention to produce that document, and that the memorandum contained several colloquial expressions which the right hon. Gentleman would not have used except under the conviction that he was speaking confidentially; and that the publication of such colloquial expression was calculated to do him serious injustice. The right hon. Gentleman has said, that a charge has been made against him that he had wished to suppress a report, in the sense of destroying it. I can say, for myself, that I never made that charge; but, speaking of the suppression of the report, I used the word in the sense in which the terms *suppressio veri* is very commonly used. He withheld the report made by Mr. Parker, and gave the House no reason to suppose that such a report was in existence, but spoke only of a conversation with Mr. Parker. I think it right to take this opportunity of saying—and I purposely deferred saying it till the Andover Committee had closed their investigation and made their report—that for the error which was committed in the production of that memorandum, I alone am responsible. The memorandum was placed in my hands by Mr. Parker, with a variety of other papers relating to his case, for the purpose of giving me full information on the subject. I exercised my own discretion entirely as to the use I made of them. I did not consult Mr. Parker on the subject. He was not aware of my intention to produce the memorandum, and it is due to him that I should take this opportunity of saying that he was in no way responsible for the production of the memorandum to which I have referred. The right hon. Gentleman spoke of Mr. Parker having made that minute of conversation, as if implying a complaint that Mr. Parker should have made a minute at all. Now I speak in the presence of several other members of the Andover Committee, and probably most hon. Members of this House have read the evidence taken before that Committee, which has now for some time been published; and I must say, with regard to the making of that memorandum—I am sorry to be obliged to express such an opinion—I think Mr. Parker was led to make it from a feeling which I fear was not entertained exclusively by him, but which prevailed among the subordinates of the poor-law office—a feeling of insecurity and of want of confidence in his superiors. The noble Lord has alluded to the evidence taken by the Andover Committee, and especially to some portions of Mr. Coode's evidence; and he stated, apparently amid the general concurrence of the House, that that evidence led to the conclusion that if the subordinates in other public departments were to act as the subordinates of the Poor Law Commissioners had acted, it would be impossible that the business of such departments could be carried on. I fear there is another conclusion to which the same evidence must lead—that there was generally entertained by the subordinate officers of the Poor Law Commissioners a feeling of a want of confidence in, and want of respect for, their superiors. I do not understand that the hon. Member for Knaresborough has mentioned Mr. Coode as an instance of a bad appointment made by the Poor Law Commissioners. [Mr. FERRAND: No.] The noble Lord, therefore, laboured under a mistake on this point. I understood the hon. Member for Knaresborough to state, that Mr. Coode had been dismissed by the Commissioners subsequently to the evidence given before the Andover Committee. [Mr. FERRAND: For writing a letter.] But the Poor Law Commissioners were not aware of that letter till after Mr. Coode's dismissal, so that it had nothing to do with his dismissal. The right hon. Gentleman was led by some of the remarks of the hon. Member for Knaresborough into the case of Mr. Day, and I think he made a sort of defence of the Poor Law Commissioners with regard to their calling upon Mr. Day to resign. The right hon. Gentleman spoke of the character of the poor-law administration in Wales as being one of the chief causes of the Rebecca riots; and I believe I am not misrepresenting the right hon. Gentleman when I say that he has to-night rested the call for Mr. Day's resignation on the ground of an indiscreet and harsh administration of the poor law, which contributed to produce those riots. This defence was not made by the Commissioners before the Andover Committee in the distinct manner in which it has been made to-night by the right hon. Gentleman. I am not at all anxious to take the House into the subject of Mr. Day's resignation; but after what has fallen from the right hon. Gentleman, I trust I may say, that the Andover Committee—(presided over by the noble Lord the Member for Devonshire, who originally voted against the Motion for Inquiry, but who, on the last day of the Committee's meeting, stated that what had transpired before the Committee had led him to believe that his vote had been a wrong one)—a Committee which did not consist of a majority of anti-poor-law members, came without a division to a resolution, which was proposed by the hon. Baronet the Member for Droitwich (a gentleman certainly not unfriendly to the Poor Law Commissioners, and a strong friend of the poor law), that after the fullest consideration of Mr. Day's statements, and those of the Commissioners, they considered that the Poor Law Commissioners had entirely failed to justify their call for Mr. Day's resignation. The case of Mr. Jenkin Jones has also been mentioned, and certainly no one can complain of the remarks made on this subject by the right hon. Gentleman. He said nothing but what he was obliged to say by the remarks of the hon. Member for Knaresborough. But as the right hon. Gentleman has stated that Mr. Jenkin Jones pleaded guilty to a charge of having bartered a public office for a corrupt consideration, I do think it only just to Mr. Jones to ask every Member of the House to look at the evidence before the Committee, and to see what were the circumstances under which Mr. Jenkin Jones pleaded guilty to the charge. I would also ask them to bear in mind these most important facts, which were mentioned by the hon. Member for Knaresborough—that at the time of his being sentenced to a year's imprisonment, Mr. Jenkin Jones held the office of actuary to an insurance company; that he had invited the directors of that company to appoint a committee for the purpose of inquiry into the whole case; that before that committee he produced all his papers; and that the directors, responsible as they were to a large body of proprietors, who generally scrutinize with extreme vigilance the proceedings of their directors, having made the investigation courted by Mr. Jones, came to the determination to keep the office of actuary open for him till he was released from his imprisonment; that they then reinstated him in his office; that he still holds it; and that upon a recent occasion a very flattering resolution was passed by a large body of the proprietors, approving of his conduct, and that resolution was accompanied by a very valuable present in acknowledgment of his services. The hon. Member for Knaresborough fell into more than one mistake in his many allusions to the evidence taken by the Andover Committee. He made one mistake, which I am anxious to correct, relative to a matter affecting Mr. Chadwick. He referred to the printed evidence, in which Mr. Lewis speaks of a report, bearing the name of Mr. Mott, having been drawn up by Mr. Chadwick, and goes on to say that he had heard, from a clerk in the office, that the draught report was in Mr. Chadwick's handwriting. The hon. Member for Knaresborough jumps at the extraordinary conclusion that there was a sort of stereotyped report which was brought out on all occasions, with some additions or alterations, to make it apply to particular localities. I need not say that this is a complete mistake: the draught report referred to as being in Mr. Chadwick's handwriting, was the original copy of this particular report. And though the report bore Mr. Mott's signature, there was no impropriety in Mr. Chadwick having assisted in the preparation of the report, because he had been sent down by the Poor Law Commissioners to assist Mr. Mott in the inquiry. The hon. Gentleman has frequently alluded to questions put by me in the Andover Inquiry Committee. I do not know whether the hon. Gentleman is of opinion that I joined in the charge that Mr. Mott was sent to make a false report with respect to the Keighley union. Now, whatever questions I might have put on that subject, I never entertained the idea that either the right hon. Gentleman or the Poor Law Commissioners sent down Mr. Mott to make a false report. The report might, or it might not, be false; but all that the evidence before the Committee went to show was, that one Commissioner, Mr. Lewis, had sent down Mr. Mott to make a report. And there is a very great difference, as the hon. Gentleman must be aware, between giving instructions to make a report which may turn out to be false, and giving instructions to make a false report.

SIR C. NAPIER said, that as the hon. Member for Knaresborough had designated the Committee on the Keighley Union as a packed Committee, he begged to say, that he (Sir C. Napier) moved for that Committee; but he did not do so until after the hon. Member had continually dragooned the House about the Keighley union, and said, that before such a Committee he would prove all his assertions to be correct. As no one appeared ready to indulge the hon. Member, he, though a young Member then, certainly did propose that a Committee should be appointed to inquire into the allegations. Being a stranger in the House at that time, he asked either the noble Lord now at the head of the Government, or some other Member, to point out proper persons to be appointed on the Committee. Certain names were given to him; and Dr. Nichol, he thought, on the opposite side, appointed other names. The hon. Member for Knaresborough was appointed one of the Committee, against his opinion; for he thought that the hon. Member ought to have been summoned as a witness. This happened four or five years ago; but he did not recollect that the hon. Member for Knaresborough made an objection to a single Member. He was almost certain that the hon. Member made no objection; and yet, after five years had passed, the hon. Member stood up and called the Committee a packed Committee, and the report drawn up by Dr. Nichol a trumped-up report. The hon. Gentleman did make a counter report; but he was only supported by two or three Members; and all the assertions made by the hon. Member were proved to be utterly groundless. He did not believe that the report was a trumped-up report. He thought it a fair report; and there were only one, two, or three Gentlemen on the Committee who made the smallest objection to it.

Mr. VILLIERS did not intend to prolong the discussion, after the manly, able, and candid manner in which the right hon. Gentleman had met the charge against him — a manner in which that House and the country delighted to see a charge met, whether true or false. The hon. Member for Knaresborough had, however, made statements with respect to one with whom he (Mr. Villiers) was connected, and for whose honour he felt a deep interest; and he could not help recalling the attention of the House to those statements before the Motion should be disposed of. The hon. Member had stated that Mr. Lewis, the Poor Law Commissioner, induced a man to confess his guilt, for the purpose of using that confession against him on a public trial by indictment; and he had also said, that Mr. Lewis destroyed documents for the purpose of preventing falsehoods being disclosed. He (Mr. Villiers) did not deny, that any Member of that House had a right to impugn any public functionary for the manner in which he acted; and, if the charges could be proved, he did not deny the hon. Member's right to make them. If true, he was bound to make them, but he was also bound to establish them. Yet the hon. Member did not produce one tittle of proof to show the truth of the charges he had made against Mr. Lewis; and he (Mr. Villiers) defied him to produce one. He believed that they were utterly false; and he believed, that of all the calumnies uttered, in or out of the House, none were more destitute of foundation, or more foul than these. He said this with perfect sincerity; and he could only suppose that the hon. Member had brought forward these calumnies for the purpose of wounding the feelings and insulting a person not present. Believing that the hon. Member had intended to insult and injure one who was absent, and thinking that one unjustly attacked ought to be defended, he had risen with that object. He could not notice the attacks made in the way in which he should wish to do in that House, because he might disturb its order; and if he were to notice them out of the House in the manner he should wish, he believed that such notice would only be received with indifference by the hon. Member. But he was anxious that the public, who would hear of the charges, should also hear the answer. The hon. Gentleman had also charged the Commissioners on another point, which he (Mr. Villiers) believed to be destitute of foundation. He had stated distinctly, that Mr. Mott was engaged as partner with another man in keeping a madhouse—that he was obliged to fly from his creditors—that he became insolvent, and could not pay his debts—and that, after this, the Commissioners appointed him to a situation of 800*l*. Now, he (Mr. Villiers) did not believe that the Commissioners appointed Mr. Mott to that situation after having discovered him to be the keeper of a madhouse, or to be insolvent; and he conceived that there could be no better proof of the charge not being true than that the appointment in question was not in the hands of the Poor Law Commissioners. He called attention simply to these statements, in order that the public might see that they were wholly unfounded and unsupported.

Mr. FERRAND, in reply, said, all he required was, that he might have a speedy and fair trial; and now that the right hon. Baronet (Sir J. Graham) had pledged himself to stand in the witness-box—and he only wished Mr. Lewis would do the same — he had no wish to prolong the present discussion, or to divide the House on the Motion. After that pledge, he would undertake not to say one word more on the subject until the trial took place. He requested that the trial should take place speedily, and that no unfair procrastination should be allowed. He had reason to complain that this had not been the case long since. The hon. Member for Wolverhampton had said that he (Mr. Ferrand) had charged the Poor Law Commissioners with appointing Mr. Mott to a certain situation. Now, he (Mr. Ferrand) believed that his expression was that they had sanctioned that appointment. Mr. Mott's appointment required the sanction of the Poor Law Commissioners, and being perfectly aware of that, he felt convinced that he had used the word "sanctioned." With respect to the documents which he alluded to as having been destroyed in Somerset House, he repeated that Mr. Lewis said that he could find no documents with respect to certain questions brought before the Andover Committee; and he had made use of the expression that he had destroyed private letters which he had written as Commissioner. There was no justification for this, because Mr. Lewis was bound by Act of Parliament to keep a record of all proceedings, whereas there were no records to be found with respect to many questions brought before the Andover Committee; and Mr. Lewis had himself admitted that he could not find them. With respect to Jenkin Jones being induced to plead guilty, he had stated that Mr. Lewis had induced that individual to make a confession, and on the confession being made, he was promised that he should not be punished. Nevertheless, the statement was made use of against him. He appealed to the hon. Member for Weymouth whether such was not the case? The right hon. Gentleman had said he had had an opportunity of examining Mr. Mott before the Committee; but that was not so. Mr. Mott had been merely called in, and asked by the Committee whether he denied any of the statements that had been made. The right hon. Baronet had also said that he had made use of the expression "a trumped-up report." Now, it happened that the same phrase had fallen that night from the hon. Member for Finsbury (Mr. T. Duncombe), who had been a friend of the right hon. Baronet in his younger days. He had also attacked him for delaying to give a reply to Mr. Lewis's solicitors, when they applied to know whether he was the writer of the letters in *The Times*. The fact was, he considered it his duty, in the first place, to write to the Editor of *The Times*, requesting to know whether he should be justified in giving up his name as the writer of the letters until he had obtained a guarantee from Mr. Lewis indemnifying *The Times* against being also proceeded against if he did so. He waited until he heard from Mr. Dobie, the solicitor to *The Times*, that he had obtained such a guarantee; and on the afternoon of the day he received it, he wrote to Mr. Lewis's solicitors, expressing his regret for the delay, and stating the reason for it, at the same time instantly confessing that he was the author of the letters. He denied that he had ever imputed corrupt motives to Mr. Twisleton. He had said he had gone *incognito* to perform certain services for individual Members of the Government: and in that language he had been borne out by the evidence taken before the Committee. The right hon. Baronet (Sir R. Peel) had stated that he (Mr. Ferrand) had repeated the statement he made at Leeds. He denied this. All he had said was that the report of his speech in *The Times* was correct, and that he stood by it. He denied on that occasion the jurisdiction of the House, and had refused to plead to its jurisdiction. With respect to what had fallen from the hon. Member for Wolverhampton (Mr. C. Villiers), he had no intention of saying anything that would render necessary the interference of the Speaker. He would not be so foolish. All he would say was, that he was prepared to stand by any language he had uttered, either in the House or elsewhere. After what had passed, he should be glad if the House would allow him to withdraw his Motion.

SIR F. THESIGER rose to assure the hon. Member for Knaresborough that there would be no delay at all in the trial of his cause. If the hon. Member would only plead as speedily as possible to the criminal information, the case would be set down for trial, and would be taken in its due course, for it was evident it could not be taken out of its regular order. The cause would be put down on the record list for trial in London, and would be tried as speedily as the business of the court allowed.

Motion, by leave, withdrawn.

CORPORAL PUNISHMENTS ON BOARD THE AMAZON.

MR. HUME rose to move—

> "That there be laid before this House a Return of the number of corporal punishments, and the number of lashes in each punishment, on board Her Majesty's ship *The Amazon*, Captain Stopford, during the time of his command; stating the number of the establishment of that ship, and the stations on which serving during that time."

The hon. Member said he had annually moved for a return of the corporal punishments inflicted in the navy, with a view of discouraging the system of flogging as much as possible. Quarterly returns were now made to the Government, who had an opportunity of seeing in what ships the practice of flogging the men most prevailed. This precaution was of great use to the navy; but he regretted that the last year's return showed a very large proportion of such punishments. It appeared that in the navy one man in ten was flogged every year, while in the army the proportion was one in a hundred. The captain of the *Amazon*, Captain Stopford, had lately been tried by a court-martial, in consequence of the reports laid before the Admiralty showing an excessive severity of punishment on board his ship. The court-martial had acquitted Captain Stopford. He did not wish to try him again, or to prejudice his case while it was under consideration; but he wanted to know what the opinion of naval officers was as to the severity of punishment, or otherwise, and what constituted it. The naval regulations of 1733 were those by which corporal punishments were at present inflicted; and he maintained that they did not empower the captain to inflict two, three, and four dozen of lashes, as was now done, without a court-martial. The greatest number given last year without a court-martial was 48, and the lowest 3; the average, he believed, was 30 or 31. He thought that excessive, and that the captain was not justified by the regulations in inflicting so many lashes.

Mr. WARD hoped that Mr. Hume would not press his Motion. It was impossible not to concur in many of the remarks which had fallen from him on the state of naval discipline; but the return asked for was of so peculiar a kind, as to induce him to hope that it would not be pressed for. Captain Stopford was the son of a distinguished Admiral, and he himself was a meritorious officer; and beyond the fact that a court-martial had been held, and a verdict of acquittal returned, nothing further was known. The minutes had not reached England; and it was evident that when an officer was acquitted of a charge, nothing could be more unjust than to publish all that told against him, and which induced the Lords of the Admiralty to direct the inquiry to be made, without any one being able to say a word in exculpation. Nothing was known of the reasons which influenced the court-martial in returning a verdict of acquittal. All that was known was, that officers of the highest reputation were members of the court. He would not pledge himself to produce the minutes when received; that would depend upon the decision of those whose opinions he represented. Under present circumstances, he thought it would be harsh and unjust to try Captain Stopford over again, which would be the effect of complying with the Motion, after his case had been disposed of by the only tribunal competent to deal with it.

Sir C. NAPIER was surprised that the hon. Member (Mr. Hume) should go back to the obsolete regulations of 1733; there had been a dozen different codes issued for the naval service since then. It was only misleading the House. Why not state what the present regulations were? It was notorious that those old regulations were not now supplied to officers, and that they acted under quite different instructions. It was most invidious, just after this gentleman had been tried and acquitted, to move for a return, not of the punishments in all the ships in the Mediterranean, but in his ship alone; it was unjust and cruel to an absent man.

Mr. W. WILLIAMS had moved on a former occasion for a return of all the punishments inflicted in the fleet in a certain period, and was refused the return. If these degrading punishments were becoming fewer, that was only because of the influence of public opinion; nothing was so useful as letting in light upon these transactions. He did not see why there should be such a distinction between the army and the navy. In the navy, if the captain of a ship filled up the forms required by the Admiralty regulations, stating that the men flogged had been guilty of such or such an offence, he could administer punishment not exceeding forty-eight lashes; and a court-martial must acquit the captain, although he might have been guilty of great cruelty.

Captain HARRIS defended the officers of the navy against any charge of wishing to continue the practice of corporal punishment on board their ships. He begged to say, that so far from desiring the continuance of the punishment, several eminent officers had advised the Government to diminish the punishment, as their desire was to see it gradually but safely abolished.

Viscount INGESTRE said, that if hon. Members who undertook to lecture officers on the infliction of punishment, had the command of a ship, they would be placed in a better position to enable them to form an opinion as to the infliction of that punishment. He should like to see one of those hon. Gentlemen in the command of a ship under difficult circumstances, with a mutinous insubordinate crew. He believed that officers of the navy felt the grave responsibility which devolved upon them in the infliction of punishment in a legal form, according to the Articles of War. The great fallacy of those who usually opposed corporal punishment in the navy was, they appeared to think that naval officers felt a pleasure in the infliction of punishment upon a man; but he could say that he had commanded two ships of war, and he was confident that he described the feelings of other officers when he stated there was no part of his duty which he felt so painful to his feelings as ordering the infliction of punishment. It was a fallacy also to form an opinion from the average amount of punishment. Any such return must be erroneous and misleading, because ships' crews differed so much. Sometimes an officer would get a crew who knew how to behave themselves, while at others, especially in war time, he would have a crew who were, perhaps, the very sweepings of the gaols, and with whom some prompt and effectual punishment was absolutely necessary. He recommended the hon. Member to inform himself more correctly before he made these kinds of statements in the House.

Mr. HUME said, that all he had desired to get at was, not whether the decision of the court-martial had been right or not, but what had been the amount and the extent of the punishments inflicted. The gallant Admiral opposite (Sir C. Napier) must have been "dining," or he would not have understood his argument as he had done. The modern rules, he would be prepared to show, were more cruel than the old ones; and, as to what had fallen from the gallant Captain (Harris), all he could say was, that in that House naval officers never raised their voices except in favour of punishment. He had had no intention to cast any aspersion on Captain Stopford, and he was surprised that his Motion should have been construed into a charge against him. After what had fallen from the Government, he would not press his Motion.

Motion withdrawn.

House adjourned at half-past Twelve.

HOUSE OF LORDS,

Friday, January 29, 1847.

IMMIGRATION OF IRISH PAUPERS.

Earl FITZWILLIAM said, he had observed on the other evening, that a great impression had been made by the statement of his noble and learned Friend who sat opposite (Lord Brougham), of the great number of Irish poor who had recently been relieved in Liverpool. He was sure that their Lordships must be aware that those poor who had recently arrived in Liverpool had not stayed there. They were not resident there. Therefore let not noble Lords, who were connected with Lancashire, imagine that they could get off scot free. They would go on to Manchester; they would go through the East Riding on to Lincolnshire and to Norfolk, and the landlords of Suffolk would not escape the infliction. Let them, therefore, not imagine that the evil was removed from their doors. This Irish distress was not a local one; it would affect the whole empire; and there was no way, he imagined, in which he could more strongly display the evil than by moving for an official return on it. He would, therefore, move for a return of the number of persons, distinguishing men, women, and children, who had been relieved as casual poor in the town of Liverpool, from the 1st January, 1847, distinguishing also the English, Scotch, and Irish, and with respect to the Irish, distinguishing those resident at Liverpool from those who had recently arrived. He moved also for a similar return from Bristol.

Lord BROUGHAM: And Glasgow and Greenock. Glasgow is much worse than Liverpool.

Lord MONTEAGLE: Say the ports on the Clyde.

Earl FITZWILLIAM: And the ports on the Clyde; also a similar return for the corresponding period of 1846.

Lord BROUGHAM said, since he had last addressed their Lordships upon this painful subject, he had received a letter from a gentleman at Liverpool, named Horsley, a large wholesale warehouseman there, in which he stated that from the reports in the newspapers he had seen that some observations were addressed by him (Lord Brougham) to their Lordships upon the subject of the great influx of Irish paupers to Liverpool. He stated in his letter that the number of persons relieved on Thursday, the 22nd, amounted to 22,640. What, the writer went on to say, would be the fearful increase, might be easily conjectured. The poor rate at present levied was 2*s.* 3½*d.* in the pound, and he himself paid 900*l.* for his portion of the poor rate. A tabular statement was also enclosed, showing the amount of the relief from the 18th to the 26th inclusive. He would not trouble the House with the details of each day, but the total number amounted to 173,538. Soup rations amounted to between 7,000 and 8,000. The amount of out-door relief was also considerably increased. The increase at present amounted to 400*l.*; of this, 378*l.* had been expended upon Irish paupers. This would give their Lordships a pretty tolerable index of the proportion of Irish paupers in Liverpool. The result was, that nineteen-twentieths of the pauper population were Irish paupers. This was a subject which required great delicacy in its management. If they were to go on month after month relieving the people at this rate, what would be the result? He had seen a letter that morning from a friend of his who had received it from his bailiff in Ireland, stating that it was quite impossible to go on with the cultivation of land, as at that moment he required 100 labourers, and could not get them, they being all too anxious to obtain employment on the public works, because they well knew that they could get good pay for it, while the value of their work was not worth 2*d.* It was clear that the Irish pauper did not like work. He (Lord Brougham) regarded with apprehension the State giving money by millions to the people for these useless works. He knew it might be said, how cruel not to give the public money to these starving people for doing nothing. It had been said that men were exceedingly generous of two things—other people's money and their own advice. This adage applied very well to these sentimental people, who were so fond of blaming persons who were opposing this squandering of the public money. They were, however, the best friends to the labourers themselves, who told them not to support a system which was calculated to make them mendicants upon the British public, and take away from them all self-reliance upon their own exertions. He had one subject to which he would briefly allude. It had been stated in the report of his speech of last night that he had said that there was a society engaged in the work of proselytising the Catholic paupers in Ireland. He (Lord Brougham) said no such thing; what he said was, that a letter was written by a reverend gentleman, whose name he would not mention, in which it was stated that it would be an excellent opportunity for members of Protestant churches to subscribe a sum of 20,000*l.*, to be expended in a mission to promulgate the tenets of Protestantism. The reasons why the rev. gentleman considered the present a favourable opportunity, were, as he had stated, that the Roman Catholic peasantry had had their feelings conciliated, and their prejudices removed—no doubt to a great degree by the generous relief which had been afforded so promptly, in the time of their severe distresses, by the Protestants of England. He had no doubt that the proceedings of the rev. gentleman were well intended; but he should try at the proper time, when the circumstances were more favourable to overcome, what he (Lord Brougham) considered the grievous errors — political, moral, and religious—of Popery, by the introduction of the principles of Protestantism, and the circulation of the Scriptures. He objected, however, to the present opportunity being taken advantage of, in order to forward the Protestant faith.

EARL FITZWILLIAM said, that unless the relief committees of the district from which the letter referred to by the noble and learned Lord, acted in a different manner to what the relief committees did elsewhere, he did not see how the evils complained of could arise to any great extent. If a proprietor or farmer wanted labourers, and could not get them in the ordinary way, and applied to the relief committee, there was no doubt that they would discharge as many from the public works as would be required for that purpose. There was no doubt that the labourers preferred employment on the roads to the ordinary employment, as the rate of wages was higher, and the labour much less; still the relief committees had the power of regulating this to a great extent. He had received a letter from one of the bailiffs of his estates in Ireland the other day, from which it appeared that the wages paid by the farmers was 8*d.* a day. The wages paid by his bailiff was 1*s.* a day, while the relief committee paid from 13*d.* to 14*d.* a day; so that the labourers preferred his (Earl Fitzwilliam's) employment to the farmers', and the relief committee to both. He was not much alarmed as to anything that had transpired up to this period, as little had been going forward in the cultivation of the land; but as February and March were the principal months for cultivation, if this state of things continued, he would have great apprehension that there would not be sufficient labourers found to cultivate the soil.

LORD BEAUMONT was of opinion that a Select Committee on the operation of the law of settlement should be appointed by their Lordships, as well as the one which had been appointed by the Lower House. He thought this was necessary, as the most erroneous impressions prevailed as to the operation of the law of settlement passed last year.

The EARL of RODEN wished to know how far the question of the noble Lord had been replied to, and how far it was the intention of the Ministry to amend the Labour-rate Act of last Session. By that Act it was competent for the farmer to apply to the Board of Works for any number of labourers he might require. By that Act the labourers were under the direction of the Board of Public Works, and if any farmer required labourers, he had nothing to do but to apply to that board. But what was the fact of the case? Supposing a farmer wanted labourers on his farm, would he apply to that board? He might do so; but if he lived in a lonely part of the country, or if he resided in a thatched house, he never could depend upon his life being safe for an hour, should he employ any labourer who was not patronized by the secret associations. He thought that the Government ought to be warned by the extent of the effects to which this Act went, and he trusted that some measures would be taken to amend its provisions. One thing of which he had to complain was, that occasion had been taken to sow religious jealousies. It had been stated, that a hope was entertained that this visitation would be beneficial in promoting the Protestant faith, and thus knitting the interests of that country with this. One of the greatest advantages, as he conceived, derivable from the calamity, and one of the greatest consolations, arose from the fact, that all religious differences were sunk in the common cause of charity. The calamity existed, and they could not hinder it; and the union of political and religious feeling — the greatest consolation that any one could possibly enjoy under the infliction—was the feeling that existed on this point. If they spent thousands upon thousands they would not prevent it; and he regretted, therefore, the more on those two accounts, that the reverend gentleman had been alluded to by the noble Lord who had just sat down, without that respect to which he was entitled. It had been stated that this was a good opportunity for uniting Ireland with England, and making converts to Protestantism. The best answer to the attack on the reverend gentleman, was the history of his life. There was not a man higher in the estimation of those with whom he had to deal; not one whose conduct under that difficulty would have been more worthy of praise; not one whose character more combined the character of the gentleman and the clergyman, than that of Mr. Bickersteth. His character was fully established in this country; and no one would regret more than that gentleman, at a time when all religious differences were sunk under the sufferings of the common calamity, if his observations should serve as a cause of difference between the two countries.

LORD BROUGHAM said, that he would exceedingly regret if a few words of his were to be considered as originating any attack upon the excellent clergyman to whom his noble Friend alluded; for he felt convinced that any observation such as he had been represented to have made, would only be a cause of increased misery in Ireland, and lead to a greater breach beween the professors of the two religions than now existed.

Returns ordered.

THE SPANISH MARRIAGES.

The EARL of ABERDEEN said, that he wished to ask the noble Marquess whether any communication had as yet been received from the French Government, in answer to the last despatch of the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, to the Marquess of Normanby; and if any such had been received, whether there was any objection to lay the same upon the Table of the House? It appeared to him, that as the correspondence had commenced by a letter from this country, it ought to close with an answer from the other side. He did not on this occasion wish to offer any opinion upon the subject-matter of the correspondence, and he hoped the House would not be called upon to give any opinion; but he would venture to state his strong belief, that their Lordships' House and the country were desirous to see that correspondence brought to a termination. It must be manifest, from what had already been produced, that it could not now be continued with any definite and practical object; and that if it were still continued in the same tone and temper in which it had been conducted, it might lead to serious mischief.

The MARQUESS of LANSDOWNE said,

that an answer to the last despatch of his noble Friend the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs had been shown to his noble Friend. Her Majesty's Government would take the very earliest opportunity of laying it upon the Table of the House. It was evident that there was a desire to see this correspondence at an end; but however desirous they might be to see it concluded, he could not say whether it might not require some observation. All he could say on this occasion was, that Her Majesty's Government were most desirous to lay before the House the fullest details of the whole correspondence.

OFFICE OF REGISTRAR OF FRIENDLY SOCIETIES IN IRELAND.

EARL ST. GERMANS said, he had given notice of his intention to present a petition from Mr. R. W. Mara, late Registrar of Friendly Societies in Ireland, complaining of his removal from that office; but that, in consequence of the necessary documents connected with the subject, by some accident or other, not reaching his hands, he would be unable to do so. The noble Earl then observed, that Mr. Mara had held the office of Registrar of Friendly Societies in Ireland under the late Government, but that the present Attorney General had removed him, and appointed another person in his stead, notwithstanding the alteration of the Act, the spirit of which evidently intended, that from and after its becoming law the office should be of a permanent character. The office was similar in its nature to that filled with so much credit in England by Mr. Tidd Pratt, whose appointment was permanent, and not dependent upon any change of Government. A case had been submitted for the opinion of a very eminent gentleman at the Irish bar, Mr. Napier, whose opinion appeared to be in favour of a permanent tenure. He (the noble Earl) felt himself unable to decide between the opinions of Mr. Napier and the Attorney General; but the impression on his mind was, that it was not the intention of the Parliamentary Committee to whom the Bill had been referred to make the appointment dependent upon a change of Government. Whether the real meaning of the Act was as Mr. Napier had construed it, or whether it was in accordance with the Irish Attorney General's opinion, he knew not; but he believed Mr. Mara's deposal from office was in violation of the spirit of the Act. Mr. Tidd Pratt had not been removed from his office; and the case of that gentleman was exactly similar. After some other remarks the noble Earl concluded by moving for copies of any letters or communications which may have passed between the Government and Mr. Mara, on his removal from the office of Registrar of Friendly Societies in Ireland.

The MARQUESS of LANSDOWNE would only trouble the House with a very few words in reply to the noble Earl opposite. He was not at all cognizant of any circumstances connected with the removal from his office of Mr. Mara until within the last twenty-four hours, when he had made some inquiries respecting it, in consequence of the notice of Motion given by the noble Earl. It was quite true that Mr. Tidd Pratt had not been removed from his office; but it should be borne in mind that Mr. Tidd Pratt had become identified with friendly societies from their earliest formation, and the public had derived great advantage from the ability and perseverance with which he had almost exclusively devoted his mind to that important subject. The situation of Registrar of Friendly Societies in England was placed upon a very different footing to that in Ireland or Scotland. It was the established practice in Ireland, that the person filling the situation should be an assistant to, and in the confidence of, the Attorney General; and it was owing to such practice that Mr. Mara had obtained his situation. The situation was always changed with the Attorney General; and Mr. Mara would not have obtained his situation at all had not such been the established practice. The only question for consideration, therefore, was, whether it could be held by any fair construction in the reading of the recent Act, that the intention was to alter the temporary nature of the office, and make it permanent. The law officers in Ireland and Scotland continued to act in this matter as their predecessors had always done, and appointed persons who were in their confidence and competent to assist them; and, in doing so, he did not think they had acted in contravention of the law.

EARL ST. GERMANS said, the only question was, whether Mr. Mara's appointment ought not to have been re-made. As it was the intention of Parliament to make the situation a permanent one, and as Mr. Mara had the good fortune to be in office at the time of the alteration of the Act, he considered he ought to have been continued in it.

The MARQUESS of CLANRICARDE thought Mr. Mara had been unlucky; but considered that, under the circumstances, he had no just cause of complaint.

After a few words from LORD CAMPBELL,

The EARL of ST. GERMANS withdrew his Motion.

House adjourned.

HOUSE OF COMMONS,

Friday, January 29, 1847.

MINUTES.] PUBLIC BILLS.—2° Chelsea Pensions; Distilling from Sugar; Customs' Duties.

Reported.—Buck Wheat, &c. Importation.

PETITIONS PRESENTED. From Castleton, for Limiting the Hours of Labour in Factories.—From Shipowners of Scilly, for carrying into effect the Recommendations of the Select Committee with respect to Lighthouses.—From Callan, for Repeal of the Union.—From North Riding of Tipperary, and Maryborough East, for the Adoption of Measures for the Relief of Destitution in Ireland.—From Chairman of a Meeting of the Inhabitants of Ballymena, for Amendment of the County Works Presentments (Ireland) Act.

PRIVATE BILLS.

MR. HUME brought under the notice of the House three Resolutions of which he had given notice. They were as follow:—

"1. That Public General Acts should be prepared for each of the several subjects of Police and Watching, of Waterworks and Sewage, of Paving, of Improvement of Towns and Regulation of Buildings, Streets, and Roads, of Markets and Fairs, of Cemeteries, of Bridges and Ferries, of Harbours, Docks, Ports, Piers, and Quays, of Canals, Rivers, and Navigation, as recommended in the Report of the Select Committee on Private Bills, embodying, as far as possible, the suggestions thereof.

"2. That the recommendation in the said Report as to the taxation of the costs of parties promoting or opposing Private Bills be also adopted, and that a proper taxing officer should be appointed, and a scale of fees, costs, and charges, be authorized and published by Mr. Speaker.

"3. That the Taxing Officer shall present to the House, at the commencement of each Session, an account of the total amount of the expenses for promoting or opposing each Bill taxed and sanctioned by him during the preceding Session, distinguishing the amount paid as fees on each Bill to each of the Houses of Parliament, the amount for witnesses and other expenses, and for professional services."

The hon. Member stated, that since the passing of the Reform Act, private Bills had cost the town of Liverpool no less than between 80,000*l.* and 90,000*l.*, while the expense of similar Bills to Glasgow had been 57,000*l.* It had been proved before the Committee on Private Bills, that solicitors charged four or five times as much for business in Parliament as for other business. The hon. Member concluded by moving his first Resolution.

SIR G. GREY admitted the great importance of the subject, but submitted that before the House pledged itself by adopting any resolution, it would be expedient to see the Bill now nearly prepared, and which would have for object the consolidation of special clauses in many private Bills. That measure now would have been upon the Table, but for the unforeseen pressure of other business. The resolutions of the hon. Member, if adopted, could hardly be brought into operation during the present Session, so that little delay would be caused by waiting for the promised Bill. Last Session he had taken objection to the second and third resolutions, since they could only be carried into effect by an Act of Parliament.

MR. HUDSON remarked upon the enormous fees paid to the House for Bills for the improvement of towns, &c., amounting in some cases to nearly as much as the whole of the other charges. That was one great reason why the public was so unwilling to come before Parliament. He hoped that a Committee would be appointed to inquire into the subject, as the charges for passing private Bills had increased four or fivefold within a few years: the burden had now become almost intolerable.

MR. HUME was willing to withdraw his resolutions until the Bill adverted to by the Secretary for the Home Department had been brought under the consideration of the House.

MR. GREENE wished the hon. Member to make a distinction between the fees paid to the House, and the charges of lawyers. A very large part of the expense of a private Bill went into the hands of agents and solicitors, over whom the House had no efficient control.

LORD H. VANE was glad that the attention of the House had been called to the subject of the fees payable to the House. He hoped that when the hon. Member for Sunderland produced the accounts of which he had spoken, he would distinguish between the fees paid to the House, and those paid to agents and solicitors.

Resolutions withdrawn.

MEXICAN LETTERS OF MARQUE.

MR. BARCLAY wished to call the attention of the noble Lord at the head of the Department for Foreign Affairs, and also the attention of the House, to an advertisement which appeared in *The Times* of the 8th of January, relating to Mexican letters of marque. It was forty years since any letter of marque had been issued, and he had entertained the hope that the improved civilization of Europe would have prevented the issue of such atrocious documents again. He wished to ask if the noble Lord's attention had been called to this document, and what measures had been taken on the part of the Government to suppress such atrocious proceedings? Before he sat down he would refer to an extract in the *Courrier Français*, by which it was declared that any French subjects who made use of the letters of marque would expose themselves to forfeit their quality as Frenchmen, and to be treated as pirates.

Viscount **PALMERSTON** observed, that if his hon. Friend had been in the House on a former occasion he would have heard a similar question put by the hon. and learned Member for Bath, and the answer which he had given to the first part of his question. He explained at the time that this advertisement was not issued by the Mexican Consul, but proceeded from a very well-meaning, and no doubt very expert, gunmaker on Tower-hill, stating that a Mexican letter of marque might be seen at his shop. He however communicated with General Mendoza, the Mexican chargé d'affaires, on the subject, and he stated that nobody was at present authorized by Mexico in this country to issue letters of marque. General Mendoza had sent him a copy of the decree and regulations under which those letters were issued, and he had referred them to the law advisers of the Crown, and the Queen's Advocate, to see how far issuing such letters of marque here would be consistent with the laws of this country. Every one knew, that under the Foreign Enlistment Act, it was not competent to the subjects of this country to equip vessels destined for any hostile purpose against any other nation, without the consent of the Crown; and it was under the provisions of that Act that those vessels were lately seized which formed part of an intended expedition under the command of General Flores, and another which it was supposed was intended to act on the coast of Portugal. With regard to the other part of his hon. Friend's question, there was no power on the part of the Government to interfere with British subjects abroad; and he confessed he should be reluctant to say that they might be treated as pirates, unless by the law of nations their conduct was considered to be piratical.

DISTRESS IN SCOTLAND.

Mr. F. **DUNDAS** wished to ask what were the intentions of the Government with regard to the increasing destitution in the Highlands and Islands of Scotland, observing that the Drainage Act was inoperative in Zetland, where the distress was very great.

Sir G. **GREY** said, that as the question put by the hon. Member was almost the same as that of which notice had been given by the hon. Member for Lymington, he would take that opportunity of answering both. The Government had it not in contemplation to establish any general system of relief in the Islands and Western Highlands of Scotland, in addition to those measures which had been already proposed with the view of mitigating the distress which prevailed in that portion of the empire. The means of which the Government had availed themselves in order to mitigate that distress, had been, in the first place, advances made under the Drainage Act of last Session, which had come in aid of that distress most opportunely and extensively, and had effected the most beneficial results, satisfying, as it did, the proprietors of the probable increased value of their land, and affording very extensive relief to a large portion of distressed labourers. In addision to this, the Government had established depôts for the sale of food; these depôts being two frigates, one of which was stationed at Tobermory, and the other at Skye; in addition to which there were Government steamers, and commissariat officers, who were directed to make inquiries, and give such assistance as was necessary. He believed that these measures had been very available in supplying the people of those districts with food, who otherwise would have been in want of the necesssries of life. Besides this, parties who applied to the Loan Commissioners might obtain loans of money, to be expended on public works, on giving security for its repayment. A loan of that kind had actually been made. In addition to this, grants had been made in a few instances to meet local subscriptions, and to relieve distress where the Scotch poor law had been found to be inefficient. He hoped that by these means the severity of the calamity in Scotland might not only be mitigated, but that by the exertions of the landed proprietors, who showed every disposition to meet the misfortune, Scotland would be brought safely through the present crisis.

Mr. MACKINNON observed, that one question which he had wished to put had not been answered, and that was whether, as it was the intention of the Government to advance a sum of money for the purchase of seed for corn and potatoes in Ireland, they were willing to have equal justice done to Scotland. He did not say that seed was wanted in the Highlands; but if it should be required there, probably there would be no objection, on the part of the Government, to afford them the same assistance as was to be given to Ireland.

Sir G. GREY said, that no such application had been made at present; but that, if made, it would certainly be taken into consideration by the Government.

DISTILLATION FROM SUGAR BILL

On the Question, that the Distillation from Sugar Bill be read a Second Time,

Mr. FORBES MACKENZIE said, the Bill had not been printed more than half an hour; and he, therefore, trusted the second reading would be postponed.

Mr. HUME did not see any reason why the second reading should be postponed. The hon. Gentleman could not object to the principle of the Bill; and if the details did not meet his views, the hon. Gentleman could object to them in Committee.

Mr. MACKENZIE could not say whether he agreed to the principle of a Bill or not before he had read it.

The CHANCELLOR of the EXCHEQUER said, that this Bill had nothing in the world in view but to carry out the resolution which the House had already agreed to. The whole question had been stated by himself to the House more than a week ago, and the resolution was agreed to unanimously. He had then understood that nobody objected to the resolution, and that some hon. Members only wished to consider some of the details in Committee. He trusted, therefore, that no opposition would be offered to the Bill in its present stage.

Mr. MACKENZIE wished to know if there was any information, with respect to this Bill, in the papers which were to be produced to-morrow.

The CHANCELLOR of the EXCHEQUER said, that he was very sorry that those papers were not in the hands of the Members at that moment; they were delayed in consequence of a great number of calculations which were to be inserted. They would, however, be ready by to-morrow morning, or, at the latest, on Monday.

Bill read a second time.

House adjourned at ten minutes to Six o'clock.

HOUSE OF LORDS,

Monday, February 1, 1847.

Minutes.] Petitions Presented. From the Relief Committee of the Queen's County, for the Adoption of Measures for the proper Supply of Food to the People of Ireland.—From Stirling, against the Proposed Measure for Lowering the Duty on Rum.—From Liverpool, complaining of the great Influx of Irish Paupers into that Town.

RENTS (IRELAND).

The Earl of MOUNTCASHELL moved for—

"A Return of the total Amount of Rents received by Agents appointed under the Court of Chancery in Ireland; specifying to what Accounts the same are paid, whether to the Credit of Suits pending, to the Credit of Minors, Lunatics, or others, from the 1st of January, 1846, to the 1st of January, 1847."

The LORD CHANCELLOR said, there could be no objection to furnishing the information the noble Lord required, but it could only be obtained by some officer of the Court of Chancery in Ireland looking through all the causes brought before that court during the last year, which would be a very difficult duty, involving enormous labour, and the results of the investigation could not be rendered available during the present Session.

The Earl of MOUNTCASHELL did not wish to give any useless trouble to any of the officers of the Court of Chancery in Ireland, but he was most anxious to ascertain what amount of property was under the control of that court. He thought it very important, under existing circumstances, that Parliament and the country should be informed what were the ways and means of Ireland; and it was with the view of obtaining that information that he moved for this return. He was, however, ready to take any other course which might be more convenient, and which the noble and learned Lord would suggest.

The LORD CHANCELLOR thought the noble Earl would obtain his object if he called upon the Accountant General of the Court of Chancery in Ireland to state from his books the receivers' balances for the last year.

The MARQUESS of CLANRICARDE observed, that no rents were paid at present in Ireland, and therefore the return for the last six months would be *nil.*

DEBT, DAMAGES, &c. (IRELAND).

The EARL of MOUNTCASHELL then withdrew his Motion, and brought forward a Motion of which he had given notice, for—

> "A Return of the total Amount of the Sums appearing to be due for Debt, Damages, and Costs upon all Decrees, Orders, and Judgments in Ireland, redocketed pursuant to the Act of 9th George IV., cap. 35, or registered pursuant to the 7th and 8th Victoria, cap. 90, and now appearing to be redocketed or registered in the Office for registering Judgments in Ireland; distinguishing those which are in Debt from those which are in Case."

The noble Earl observed, that there were upwards of 100,000,000*l.* of debt on Irish property, and he thought it most important that this return should be furnished to the House.

The MARQUESS of WESTMEATH considered that if this Motion were agreed to, the officers of the Irish courts would be so continually and unremittingly employed in obtaining the information required, that the business in their offices would be entirely suspended. He thought, however, that it was very desirable the information should be obtained, if it could be furnished without impeding the business of the officers of the court.

The LORD CHANCELLOR apprehended that, in the first place, it would be impracticable to obtain this return, for, in order to supply the information asked for by the noble Earl, it would be necessary to examine all the records of the Courts of Law and Equity in Ireland, and that for an indefinite period. He also considered that the return, if obtained, would be perfectly useless; for, supposing it showed 100,000,000*l.* of debt, as the noble Earl (Mouncashell) imagined would be the case, it would not show what proportion of that debt had been paid, and would not, therefore, give any accurate view of the actual incumbrances of property.

LORD BROUGHAM observed, that even if the return showed the balance unpaid in each case, it would afford no test, nor anything like a test, of the burdens affecting landed property in Ireland, for the return would only apply to property which had been brought into the Courts of Chancery or Common Law. He suggested the postponement of the Motion for a week, in order that some communication might take place with the officers of the courts in Ireland, to ascertain whether there would be any material difficulty in making the return.

Motion withdrawn.

IRISH PAUPERS IN LIVERPOOL.

LORD BROUGHAM presented a petition from the mayor, magistrates, and a number of highly respectable inhabitants of Liverpool, complaining of the influx of Irish paupers into that seaport. The petition stated that in fourteen days no fewer than 11,104 paupers came over from Ireland (being at the rate of 800 a day), exclusive of Thursday last, when upwards of 1,100 were brought over in two steamers. The petitioners stated they had reason to believe that thousands of persons were at the present moment begging their way to the various seaports of Ireland, with the intention of seeking their food in this country, and, if possible, in Liverpool. They therefore prayed their Lordships to interfere for their relief, and expressed a hope that Parliament would not separate without passing a law by which the people of Ireland as well as the people of England should be compelled to support their own poor. Upon the subject of a poor law for Ireland he would not express any opinion until the proper moment arrived for discussing it. Meanwhile the grievance to the people of Liverpool was of an extremely serious character; for, although under a recent Act these paupers could be sent back, yet the expense of their maintenance until that could be done, and the expense of their transmission, fell very heavily upon the ratepayers. He was aware the public press contended that the land of Ireland ought to be taxed for the support of the Irish poor; but that would be only taxing the landlords twice over, because the mortgagee would call in his mortgage. Such a proposition was a species of cheap humanity that reminded him of a saying of Lord Elibank's, that there were two things in which most people were exceedingly generous—other people's money and their own advice. These persons were proclaiming the right of the poor to be fed; but he denied the right of the poor man to be fed, unless by his own labour. The Government were not bound to feed the poor, or even to find them work. The only duty of the Government in that behalf was to remove all obstacles in the way of the people finding work for themselves.

Some persons were calling out for more public works in Ireland, and others demanded a loan of 20,000,000*l.* for making the railways. He would not stop to inquire whether these latter had first bought shares in the Irish railways, and wished to raise the price of them. But he warned the House that all the millions they might give would not stop the mouths of those who were crying for food. He trusted that whatever steps their Lordships might take respecting the maintenance of the Irish poor would be in the right direction, and that they would not suffer themselves either to be driven, or coaxed and seduced, into any other by compliments to their humanity. He feared that complaints would soon be heard from Glasgow, Greenock, Bristol, and other ports, unless some measure could be devised for checking the immigration of Irish paupers.

The MARQUESS of WESTMEATH, as a representative Peer of Ireland, admitted that the town of Liverpool had a grievance. The inhabitants thought they could trace it to the landed proprietors of Ireland; but he said it did not lie at their door, but at the door of those laws which were directed against the management of their estates, and from which they could not escape. There was also the greatest difficulty in putting the law in force for the ejection of tenants at will. There was much delay at first, occasioned by the length of the notice required; and even after verdict was obtained it was not always easy to eject the defendants, where there were many persons interested in opposing the execution of the law. And even where that was effected, there was the utmost difficulty in getting a new tenant, so fearful were the people of being attacked; so that it was not unusual for a landlord to put a person in possession on his own account, thus rendering him liable to violence, and perhaps to be murdered. He could mention a case which illustrated the difficulty of putting the law in force. He had himself, after much delay and unnecessary expense, recovered verdicts against some persons who were on his land. Some of those were subsequently lodged in prison. They applied under the Insolvent Act, when they were duly called on to give up possession of the land. But they got men to come forward and swear they were not in possession of it, and the court believed those witnesses. The consequence was, that the men were discharged, and they returned and took possession of the land again. He contended that it was not just that the landlords should be called on to bear the whole burden of the consequences of a state of things which they were powerless to prevent. He said this with every feeling of gratitude as an Irishman for the efforts which the English were making to mitigate the existing distress in Ireland; but for his own part he would say give him his estate, and he would not ask the Government for money. He felt it to be his duty on all occasions, as he did on the present, to rise and enter his protest against the aspersions and imputations that were constantly cast upon the Irish landlords.

LORD BROUGHAM disclaimed having cast any imputation on the landlords of Ireland.

House adjourned.

HOUSE OF COMMONS,

Monday, February 1, 1847.

MINUTES.] NEW MEMBER SWORN.—For Dundalk, Daniel O'Connell, jun., Esq.

PUBLIC BILLS.—3° and passed:—Buck Wheat, &c. Importation.

PETITIONS PRESENTED. From Plymouth, and other places, for carrying into effect the Recommendations of the Select Committee with respect to Lighthouses. — From Chorley, and other places, for Limiting the Hours of Labour in Factories. —From Chairman of the West India Association of Dublin, for Allowing the Use of Sugar and Molasses in Breweries and Distilleries.—From Chairman of the Board of Guardians of Carrickmacross, for Reclamation of the Waste Lands of Ireland.—From Dublin, and other places, for the Adoption of Measures for the Relief of the Poor in Ireland.—From Dublin, for Postponing the Second Reading of the Destitute Persons (Ireland) Bill.—From Hunslet, and Bedford Union, for Alteration of the Law of Settlement.—From Cork, and Kincardine, against the Proposed Alterations of the Duty on Rum.

HAYDOCK LODGE LUNATIC ASYLUM.

MR. W. O. STANLEY begged to ask the right hon. Gentleman if he would lay upon the Table of the House the Report made since last Session by the Visiting Commissioners in Lunacy as to the state of Haydock Lodge Lunatic Asylum, that the House might be informed of the causes which had produced the great and unusual mortality there, and also under what provisions the license to that Asylum had been renewed?

SIR G. GREY replied, that he had received not very long ago a full report from the Commissioners of Lunacy on the subject to which the hon. Gentleman referred, and that he was prepared to lay it on the Table of the House at an early period. The report was accompanied by a letter from the Commissioners, expressing a strong opinion that it was not desirable to lay the whole of the evidence upon the Table of the House. They conceived that the evidence contained particulars which were not necessary to their inquiry, and that their report would put the House fully in possession of the grounds on which their opinion had been formed.

LOANS TO LUNATIC ASYLUMS.

MR. W. O. STANLEY inquired whether the Government were preparing a Bill to amend the Act 8th and 9th Victoria, cap. 126, with regard to the power of counties and subscribers to a lunatic asylum to unite and borrow money from the Consolidated Fund? Great difficulties had arisen in North Wales on this subject, and the Commissioners, to whom application for a loan must be made, had refused to lend money; the clauses in regard to unions containing the word "counties," whereas, in the clauses which related to borrowing, "county" only was the word introduced.

SIR G. GREY observed, that a representation had been made to him in regard to certain difficulties which had occurred in the construction of that Act. The matter had been referred to the law officers of the Crown; and he was not prepared to say that it would be necessary to bring in any Act of such a nature as the hon. Gentleman suggested.

THE WELLINGTON STATUE.

CAPTAIN POLHILL wished to learn from the noble Lord (Viscount Morpeth) whether he was prepared to give any information to the House on the subject of the Wellington Statue, and whether it was the intention of Her Majesty's Government to allow it to remain, or to have it removed. The reason why he put the question was, because if it were to remain where it was, the scaffolding might be taken down.

VISCOUNT MORPETH: The Government have signified their wish to the subcommittee of the Wellington Statue, that it should be removed from the place which it at present occupies.

LABOURING POOR (IRELAND) BILL.

LORD J. RUSSELL moved the Order of the Day for the Second Reading of the Labouring Poor (Ireland) Bill.

MR. WILLIAMS rose to move—

> "That the Second Reading and all other stages in that House of the Poor Relief (Ireland) Bill should have precedence of the said Labouring Poor (Ireland) Bill."

If he thought that the clauses of the latter Bill granting an indemnity to the Government would be opposed, he should not for a moment think of interposing the proposition he now made. On the contrary, he believed that Bill would pass with the unanimous approbation of the House. The Lord Lieutenant and Government of Ireland had taken upon themselves the responsibility of an extreme exercise of power. Such extreme exercises of power were viewed with the utmost jealousy by the people of this country, except in cases of pressing necessity; but it was agreed on all hands that in the present instance a pressing necessity existed; immediate measures were called for from all parts of Ireland; the Government responded to that call; and the course they had taken met with universal approbation. The hon. Member for Limerick (Mr. Smith O'Brien) alone had objected, and stated that the Members of the Irish Government ought to be impeached. No difference, however, was likely to arise on that part of the Bill which related to an indemnity. But there were other portions of it which were likely to excite discussion, and he thought the Poor Law Amendment Bill ought to take precedence of all the measures proposed by the Government. That measure he regarded as the keystone of all measures for permanently relieving the difficulties of Ireland with the least possible expense. It was the only means by which the recurrence of the present calamity could be averted. All attempts to introduce other remedial measures would fail; and it must come at last to the establishment of an efficient poor law. It was high time that measures should be taken for the removal of those evils which had produced so much estrangement of feeling from this country in Ireland. If an efficient poor law had been introduced into Ireland last year instead of the Labour-rate Act, the country would have saved an expenditure of 4,000,000*l.*; and that expenditure had been made in a great degree upon idleness, and perhaps in an equal degree upon worthless works. Instead of being employed in preparing the ground for corn, so as to afford some hope for the ensuing harvest, the people were all running after this half-idle labour, neglecting their fields; and there was no security that the country would not next year be called upon to make similar sacrifices for the relief of distress in Ireland. Her Majesty's Government had introduced another measure, under the title of the Destitute Persons (Ireland) Bill, which proposed to establish a vast extent of machinery for carrying out its object, which at all events ought to make the measure efficient. The first clause contained nothing but a provision for the appointment of officers under all manner of names. Power was given to the Government to do what they pleased, and spend what money they pleased, a sort of demi-dictatorial power; but the operation of the Bill was limited to the 1st of October this year. The noble Lord at the head of Her Majesty's Government thought 7,000,000*l.* would be required before the 1st of August for the relief of Ireland. When the 1st of August arrived the noble Lord would, he believed, have his eyes opened—would discover that he had only got to the beginning of the end, and be forced to introduce other measures instead of the one now proposed. The House was called upon to adopt measures of permanent relief for destitution in Ireland. There was none which could accomplish the object without an efficient poor law. The resources of Ireland were amply sufficient for the maintenance of her own poor without drawing upon the means of the hard-working people of this country. The noble Lord had referred to Sir R. Kane's opinion that Ireland might maintain 17,000,000 of population, which was more than double her present population. The grain and cattle she exported to England last year were valued at upwards of 7,000,000*l.*, and if a return could be got as to butter, cheese, and the supplies to the army, navy, ordnance, and commissariat, the amount might be estimated at nearly 10,000,000*l.* These were extraordinary supplies for a country upon the point of starvation to send from her shores in one year; and the right hon. the Secretary for Ireland ought to ascertain into whose pockets the proceeds went before he asked the House to take so much from the hard-earned wages of the people of this country. In regard to the Poor Bill introduced by Her Majesty's Government, he (Mr. Williams) did not express any approbation of that measure. As it stood, he thought it defective; it was not a material improvement upon the existing poor law of Ireland. There were 98,982 poor persons in the workhouses of Ireland on the 2nd of January this year, of whom 18,988 were able-bodied persons. It could not be doubted that the aged and infirm, to whom the Bill gave a right to be relieved, were provided for under the existing poor law before the able-bodied were admitted into the workhouses. Certain powers were to be vested in the Lord Lieutenant. But, scanty as were the provisions of the Bill, it was uncertain whether they would be carried out, for one Member of Her Majesty's Government had expressed an opinion of so peculiar a character as to suggest a suspicion that the result would be doubtful. The Marquess of Lansdowne had stated that—

> "Above all, you know that such a measure, in the nature of what is called out-door relief, would be utterly unsafe. That any general system of out-door relief in that country would be, in other terms, a general confiscation of property there; for the experience of the last few months has demonstrated that the people would have recourse to public charity in preference to making any efforts to obtain their own support, and would use for that purpose unlawful means, which it would be impossible for the local authorities to control. But there are a class of persons for whom, in the event of their not being received into the workhouse in the present state of society, something should be done to secure relief; I mean the aged, the sick, and the infirm. It is proposed that if they cannot be admitted into the workhouse, from its being full, there shall be authority given to the guardians to give them sustenance from the workhouse, in the manner most beneficial to themselves. Connected with this, there must be provision for particular cases of extreme destitution, amounting to the hazard of death; these must be relieved by an officer appointed for that purpose, who should have power to afford relief for the moment, and the guardians should afterwards deal with the case. This subject requires much more attention than it can receive while those other and more pressing measures are under consideration. Nevertheless, I thought it but right to inform you that such an intention is entertained; the more so, because I believe a great many persons, who might otherwise be disposed to vote the large sums of money, or to make the large advances which I believe the present state of Ireland requires, and which will, so far as respects the future improvement of estates, be repaid, would feel an unwillingness to make those advances unless assured that permanent measures for the improvement of the condition of the poor were devised, and proposed to be carried into effect."

Were those measures more wanted than an efficient poor law? If the Government carried other measures alone, he apprehended that the result would be of a most unfavourable character. There was no provision in the Bill for the enforcement of the payment of rates for the purposes of relief. There was no mode of meeting such a case as that which occurred only a few days ago at Castlebar. It appeared from a report which had been published in the newspapers, that the guardians of the poor of the Castlebar union assembled on Saturday, the 23rd of January, to take the bankrupt state of the union into consideration.

> "Mr. Otway, the assistant commissioner, was present, and in very forcible language urged the guardians to strike a rate, by which to raise a sufficient sum to enable them to receive 600 paupers into the workhouse, the number it was erected to contain. On a division, it was found that thirteen voted against, and only three for the new rate. In the majority were the agents of Lord Lucan and Sir Roger Palmer."

These were two of the largest landed proprietors of that district, and here were their agents appearing at a meeting of the guardians opposing the imposition of a sufficient rate to meet the extreme destitution existing in that part of Ireland. But what followed? "After the guardians," said the same local paper from which he had quoted—

> "Had decided on not striking a new rate, or to levy funds for the support of the poor, Mr. Otway pressed upon them the actual necessity of arranging for the support of the 106 paupers in the house. They, however, made no arrangement, trusting, as they stated, that the collector would be enabled to collect sufficient funds to procure food for the weekly support of the pauper inmates. This, however, is a very precarious provision, for the collector declared he would not undertake to collect unless protected by the military and civil power."

It would appear from this, that the country was in a most woful condition, when the collector declared he could not collect rates to provide for the famishing poor, or even for one-sixth of what they ought to provide for, without the aid of the military and civil power. It was a remarkable fact, however, that although it was found so difficult to collect rates, the landlords were enforcing payment of their rents. At the last meeting of the Repeal Association, in Conciliation-hall, Dublin, Mr. W. F. Kelly, solicitor—[Mr. O'CONNELL: A most respectable man]—a most respectable man the hon. and learned Gentleman said, and he (Mr. Williams) had no doubt of it, stated—

> "That amidst the general distress and wholesale destruction of crops, the landlords of Mayo are pursuing their miserable tenants for rent. At the sessions held in Ballinrobe there were entered 1,600 civil bills; upwards of 900 were at the suit of landlords and agents, some for the recovery of November rent. At Ballina, in the same county, there were between 5,000 and 6,000 civil bills and ejectments; the average number of civil bills being under 1,500. The excess was caused by the proceedings of the landlords. At Castlebar," (where, as the noble Lord said, the doors of an almost empty workhouse were closed up in the face of famine), "there were 1,600 civil bills; the greatest number were brought at the suit of landlords, and many for November rents."

Mr. Kelly had added, that—

> "The landlords—the drivers—have, in order, as I believe, to avoid public reprobation in that division, got up a system of inducing the poor tenants to pass notes for accruing rent. Several actions have been brought, grounded on these notes, against these half-starved wretches, and in several cases, actions were brought in this way for the November rent. ['Name, name.'] Mr. John Browne, of Mount Browne, brought several actions, as plaintiff, to those sessions, several for the recovery of notes so passed, and for use and occupation to November last. This is the gentleman who writes so much, calling on the Government to alleviate the condition of the poor. Is this a model of an Irish landlord?"

When facts like these appeared before the public, he did say that the House was called upon to pause before they voted away public money without due inquiry for the relief of distress in Ireland. He felt sure that it was a feeling almost universal in this country, that the people would do all in their power to alleviate the distress in Ireland, wherever a fair and just case of necessity was made out. But he asked the Government how long were they going to pursue that system of proposing one inefficient measure after another? They had tried their first Poor Law Bill, and what had it done for the people of Ireland? The Commissioners appointed to inquire into the state of the people of Ireland, with the view of making out a case of necessity for a poor law, had reported that, in 1835, there were 1,131,000 agricultural labourers who only received from 2*s.* to 2*s.* 6*d.* a week wages; and that for thirty weeks out of the fifty-two in each year, one-half of those persons were entirely out of employment. Including their families, here were 2,355,000 dependent on those miserable wages. And what provision had Her Majesty's then Government—of which the present Government was principally composed—made for these 2,355,000 persons? They had provided accommodation in workhouses for only 99,200, so that there were more than 2,250,000 still left destitute. It would be in the recollection of the House, that the noble Lord at the head of the Government related to the House, with proper feeling, the condition of the people of England as described in a work by Sir Thomas More. Now, he considered that extract as precisely describing the condition of Ireland at the present time; and he regarded the state of things in England then, and the state of things in Ireland now, as springing from precisely the same cause, namely, the oppression of the landed proprietors. The noble Lord had here also referred to the state of England just previous to the passing of the Poor Law Act of Elizabeth, and mentioned that not less than 70,000 persons had been executed for crimes committed against persons and property in the course of two years; but the landlords of that period were forced to make due provision for the poor, in order to provide security for their own lives and property; and no sooner was the poor law of Elizabeth put in operation than tranquillity was restored. Let the Government pursue the same course as regarded Ireland, and he had no doubt that similar good consequences would follow. He had heard various reasons given for the unhappy condition of Ireland; one of which was, that owing to an inherent defect in the race to which they belonged, the Irish were too lazy to work. Now, he had seen the Irish in Canada and in the United States, where they had an open field for their labour, and had found them maintaining a perfect equality as to industry and love of personal comfort, with the English, Scotch, Germans, Americans, and others by whom they were there surrounded; and all they wanted to enable them to exhibit the same characteristics in their own country, was fair play. But while they were kept on such miserable wages as 2*s*. or 2*s*. 6*d*. a week, what could be expected from them? He had only one other observation to make. He begged to call the attention of the House to a class of persons who, he thought, ought to be made to bear a part of the burdens of Ireland—much more so than the hard-working people of this country. It had been stated by Lord Mountcashell that the rental of Ireland was 13,000,000*l*. a year, and that out of this 10,000,000*l*., at least, were paid in incumbrances; so that the landlords had only 3,000,000*l*. left. Now, it might be very true that this was all that went into the pockets of the landlords, but how much went into the pockets of the middlemen? He should like to see the middlemen made to pay their share of the poor rates. The mortgagees should also be made to pay their share. Ireland paid no portion of the income tax, the assessed taxes, the soap tax, or the tax on tiles, which amounted to about 12,000,000*l*. a year. She likewise paid a lower rate of duty on home-made spirits than was paid in England, which amounted to 2,000,000*l*. last year. In short, Ireland, during the last forty-six years, had paid only one-twelfth of the taxes of the United Kingdom, her quota being on the average not more than four millions and a half annually. No country in Europe was so lightly taxed, in proportion to its population, as Ireland. He trusted that the Government would at once endeavour to devise measures to prevent the recurrence of those scenes of distress which had periodically afflicted Ireland—to remove the heartburnings which prevailed in that country—and cordially unite it to England, both in feeling and interest. If the noble Lord at the head of the Government should be able to accomplish that great object, he would leave behind him a name unsurpassed by that of any Minister who had ever conducted the affairs of this country. The hon. Member concluded by submitting his Motion to the House.

The Motion was not seconded.

Mr. BERNAL OSBORNE thought that Members connected with Ireland were justified in asking, as they had done, for time in order to consider the proposal of the noble Lord; and he, for one, did not think it would have been respectful either to the noble Lord or to the House, if he had offered any crude observations on the proposal of the noble Lord when it was first introduced—a proposal which, whatever might be the opinions entertained of certain parts of it, must be confessed to have been prepared with great care, amidst the greatest difficulties. And whilst he concurred with the hon. Member for Louth in his commendation of the tone and temper of the noble Lord in introducing his measures—whilst he admitted the clearness of statement and the lucid arrangement which the noble Lord exhibited, he could not draw the most favourable auspices as to his future government of Ireland from the plan submitted by the noble Lord. What did the noble Lord propose to do? It appeared to him that the scheme laid down by the noble Lord did not propose to do anything more than what was proposed at all periods and by all the Governments of Ireland. The noble Lord appeared to him to persevere in the same bit-by-bit system of legislation—to adopt plans suited to the exigencies of the moment, without laying the foundation of any great and comprehensive measure for improving the social condition of the Irish people. Parliament had for a series of years shut its eyes to the fact that there were 2,500,000 destitute poor in Ireland. They had been suddenly awakened to a knowledge of the circumstance by the potato famine, and they were now endeavouring by convulsive efforts of legislation to correct evils which had been in a great measure incurred through the neglect and carelessness of that House. He must say he thought the Irish Members had discharged their duties nobly, first of all by calling the attention of the Government to the fact that an additional supply of food was requisite to save the people from destruction; and next in seconding the Government, whatever mistakes they might have committed as to the first measures which they took for dealing with the famine in Ireland, in the laudable anxiety they now exhibited to better the condition of the people. Before he entered on the few observations which he meant to make as to the proposal of Government, he would make a remark or two by way of review of the measures which they had already passed. He meant particularly to refer to a measure not much commented on in that House, but dwelt upon at far greater length in another place—he alluded to the 9th & 10th Victoria. It was difficult, he could assure the House, for any Member who had witnessed the pernicious and destructive nature of that Act, to speak of it with moderation, for it had done nothing but broken up the roads, impoverished the country, demoralized the people, and burdened the finances of England. The noble Lord, in introducing the measure on the 17th of August, said—

> "I trust that the course I intend to pursue will not be without its counterbalancing advantages; that it will show the poorest among the Irish people that we are not insensible, here, to the claims which they have on us as the Parliament of the United Kingdom; that the whole credit of the Treasury and means of the country are ready to be used as it is our bounden duty to use them, and will, whenever they can be usefully applied, be so disposed as to avert famine, and to maintain the people of Ireland; and that we are now disposed to take advantage of the unfortunate spread of this disease among the potatoes, to establish public works which may be of permanent utility. I trust, Sir, that the present state of things will have that counterbalancing advantage in the midst of many misfortunes and evil consequences."

It was clear that, on the 17th of August last, the noble Lord contemplated that half, at least, of the expense should be borne by the finances of the country. It was not his intention to attack the noble Lord on account of the defects of that measure. August legislation was apt to be of a hasty and careless character. When the charms of grouse entered into competition with the duties of statesmanship, there was little chance of a Bill of that nature being properly considered. But this measure had no precedent, so far as the contradictory nature of its enactments went, but the Act passed in an Irish Parliament, which he had heard of, and which was for making fifty miles of turnpike road, and passed as a rider to a Tobacco Bill. If the Irish Members had known what were the provisions of the Labour-rate Act, they never would have allowed it to pass even as a temporary measure. The noble Lord stated a few nights since that he did not attach much importance to the objection that the works executed in Ireland were useless. Now, it appeared to him that the noble Lord committed a gross blunder in the science of political economy in confounding works of charity with works of labour. By confounding those two different objects, the noble Lord had neither reaped any benefit, nor conferred any favour. He had stated that it was not his intention to attack the noble Lord, but he thought that Government had committed a grave mistake in suffering five months to pass without calling Parliament together. It must be borne in mind that the Act of the 17th of August was proposed, not in contemplation of a famine, but as a remedy for the distress likely to ensue from a "partial failure of the potato crop." Early in September, however, the actual state of things was known, and yet Ireland was left until the middle of January with nothing but an Act framed with a view to "a partial failure of the potato crop." When the awful fact burst upon the country, Parliament ought to have been summoned to meet instantly. If the noble Lord wanted a precedent, there was that of 1800, when, in consequence of the high price of provisions in a time of scarcity, Parliament was suddenly assembled in November. It was a futile excuse to allege that it would have been unwise to withdraw the Irish Members from their country at that time; they could have been better spared in the autumn than now. There was no difficulty in collecting the last harvest; but there might be much difficulty in getting the people to prepare the ground for the next. It was alleged that, upon this point, the noble Lord had acted in accordance with the expressed opinion of the Lord Lieutenant. Lord Besborough's opinion was entitled to respect. That noble Lord had many opportunities of knowing the condition and circumstances of the country. He was a resident landlord, an improving landowner, and enjoyed the confidence of all classes. As the noble Lord had stated that he refrained from assembling Parliament under the advice of the Lord Lieutenant, he was desirous of knowing whether the noble Lord had adopted the suggestions of the Lord Lieutenant with respect to other matters, because there was a prevalent notion in Ireland that the Lord Lieutenant had called for the advance of funds for the construction of railroads and other productive works, which would have repaid the whole of the money expended upon them. He protested against making the real property of Ireland pay for the whole expense of this national calamity, as had been done under the Labour-rate Act. There was no precedent for throwing the burden exclusively upon the land in a case of this kind. It had been said that the Irish gentry had been parties to a wasteful expenditure of money; but he begged the House to remember, that in the first instance, the gentry were obliged to part with their money under compulsion. They voted the money in sessions, but it was voted in some cases under a protest. In the second place, the gentry were superseded by the Board of Works, and a numerous and brilliant staff, such as the world never before saw—a staff of 11,785 officers and stewards, all influenced doubtless by the best motives, and all profoundly ignorant of the localities in which they were appointed to act. In 1845, the gentry of Ireland were called upon to make large abatements of rent, and to raise subscriptions of money, for the support of the people. In 1846, they were required to make still greater exertions, with decreasing means. They were obliged to do what they had done *nolens volens*, and he might say, *pro malo publico*. The hon. Member for Coventry should have recollected that the Irish gentry were placed in most extraordinary circumstances, and should not have attempted to hold them up to scorn when, at an appalling crisis, they were manfully doing their duty. The noble Lord had informed the House that the Labour-rate Act was to come to an end, and that the plans now proposed were to be substituted for it; but he had some doubt as to the practicability of carrying those plans into effect, and of getting the people off the roads, and inducing them to resume their ordinary occupations. He confessed he did not see the means for effecting this mportant change. The Minister of the Crown was in the same situation as the author in the *Critic;* all his *dramatis personæ* were on their knees, and he, puzzled as to the manner in which they should make their *exeunt*, was obliged to suggest that they should go off kneeling. There were 500,000 men employed on the roads; and the noble Lord supposed that, by the aid of soup-kitchens and the levying of rates, these men might be absorbed by the farmers employed in agricultural pursuits. That was to him a strange supposition. He was at a loss to know how the farmers could give employment to any considerable number of persons. The farmers were suffering by famine, and had supported themselves, though very scantily, by going on the roads, and getting wages from the Board of Works. Then, the noble Lord talked of collecting rates. Sir John Burgoyne had been engaged in some of the most stormy scenes in the Peninsula; but if he were to be responsible for the collection of rates in Ireland, he would undertake a service far more chivalrous and arduous than any in which he had heretofore been employed. The noble Lord said that his plan had been approved by the officers of the Board of Works, and of the Commissariat Department; and great stress had been laid on that circumstance. Turn to the blue book upon this subject, and it would be found that there was no plan, be it what it might, which was submitted to them, by any Government, of which they were not ready to approve. The noble Lord would have exercised a sounder discretion if, besides establishing soup-kitchens, he had paid greater attention to the tilling of the land for the next harvest. The number of farms in Ireland was about 750,000, and of these more than half were under twenty acres; 310,000 under five acres, 152,000 under ten acres, 79,000 from fifteen to thirty acres, and 47,000 above thirty acres. If the noble Lord was prepared with the machinery to carry his plans into execution, he called upon him to employ it in cultivating all the farms in Ireland under ten acres, otherwise he might be assured they would remain uncultivated. Then, again, if the prospect of the next harvest depended upon the grant of 50,000*l.* to the landlords for seed, the state of affairs next year would be worse than it was in this. At a rough calculation, the noble Lord's grant for seed would amount to about 2*d.* per acre, and would only sow 125,000 acres. Such a sum as 50,000*l.* might do very well if the noble Lord were anxious to encourage a good breed of poultry in Ireland; but it was a mere farce to speak of it as applicable to the supply of seed. If it were not increased, it was so inadequate that the land would remain in its present neglected state. The noble Lord, in the course of his speech, took occasion to deprecate the idea which he said was entertained by a great many people, that it was either the duty or in the power of Government to provide food for a whole people. He agreed with the noble Lord that it was impossible for any Government to provide food for the entire population of the country; but that was pushing the argument *ad absurdum*. It would be perfectly proper to call upon the Government to provide depôts of food for the destitute portion of the population, in order to mitigate the evil, and that was all that the Irish gentry had done. Before the noble Lord indulged in the observations which he had made respecting the Marquess of Sligo, he might have taken the trouble to ascertain what had been the course pursued by that nobleman. The noble Marquess had not only sacrificed an extensive deer-park, of no fewer than 600 head of deer, in order to establish and supply a soup-kitchen, but was giving 70*l.* weekly to keep open the poorhouse at Westport. The noble Lord mistook the noble Marquess's meaning when he attributed to him an assertion of the doctrine that it was the duty of the Government to feed the whole people. The correspondence to which the noble Lord had referred, had its origin in a dispute which the Marquess of Sligo had with Sir R. Routh, respecting the employment of the people on unproductive works, to which the noble Marquess objected. The Marquess of Sligo also called upon the Government, in October last, to remove the 4*s.* duty upon corn. That was not an unnatural call for the noble Marquess to make, bearing in mind a certain letter which had been written from Edinburgh in November, 1845, which commenced in these words:—

> "The present state of the country in regard to the supply of food cannot be viewed without apprehension. Forethought and bold precaution may avert any serious evils—indecision and procrastination may produce a state of suffering which it is frightful to contemplate."

That letter was signed by Lord John Russell, and was written on the 22nd of November, 1845. Affairs had changed since then; but, looking at the terms of that letter, it was natural that the Marquess of Sligo should call upon the noble Lord to remove the 4*s.* duty, and open the ports in October, 1846. Whilst upon this part of the subject, he would take occasion to compliment the hon. Member for Winchester on the singular foresight which he had displayed in some observations which he had made in the House on the 17th of August. It appeared to him (Mr. Osborne) that the noble Lord could not be correctly informed as to the real state of Ireland, and the condition of the people in certain parts of the country. He had in his pocket a letter from an inspector of mining companies in Ireland. He stated that they would have been obliged to close their mines but for the munificence of the company, who subscribed a large sum to procure a supply of food, for the men actually lay in bed from Saturday night till Monday, unable to procure food, though with money in their pockets, because there was none in the country. He came now to another subject—the proposed reclaiming of the waste lands in Ireland. The noble Lord stated the quantity of waste land capable of improvement to be 4,600,000 acres; Mr. Griffiths estimated it at 6,290,000 acres, of which 3,755,000 acres were improvable; but of these 2,330,000 acres could only be made rough meadow, as pasture for sheep. On this subject they had some evidence, of which it was as well the House should be in possession. The Government had already reclaimed some waste lands, and there was at the present time a considerable model farm upon land of that kind, called King William's-town. Mr. Griffiths, in his report from this farm in 1836, says—

> "The cost of reclaiming 'flow bog' is 9*l.* 9*s.* 10*d.* per acre; the produce for four years is worth 24*l.* 3*s.* 5*d.*; the expenditure for the same time is 25*l.* 12*s.* 6*d.*; leaving a loss at the end of four years of 1*l.* 9*s.* 1*d.* The estimate for reclaiming 'compact bog' is 6*l.* 3*s.* per acre; produce for four years, 24*l.* 3*s.* 5*d.*; the expenditure for the same period 22*l.* 5*s.* 8*d.*; leaving a profit of 1*l.* 17*s.* 9*d.* on reclaimed land of the best quality."

He was sure the House of Commons would look with a little caution before it voted a million of money for this rather utopian scheme. He had no objection to the principle of taking a man's land and improving it, if it could be proved that it was for the good of the commonwealth; but he had an objection to the people of England paying all this money for a scheme at best problematical. Mr. Griffiths, in his report for 1844, further said of this kind of reclaimed land—

> "Unfortunately, during the three previous years the seasons were so unfavourable, only a small portion of the crops of oats and potatoes grown on the reclaimed land came to maturity; the people in consequence were reduced to great distress."

And again, of the model farm—

> "The crops of all kinds are unusually subject to the vicissitudes of the seasons; but it has been so far able to keep its head above water as to return a deficit in three years of 23*l.* 11*s.* 9½*d.*"

The House ought to pause before it engaged in such an undertaking; and what did the Government propose to do? There were 4,600,000 acres of waste land; a grant of 1,000,000*l.* would be about equal to 4*s.* per acre to reclaim land worth only 2*s.* 6*d.* per acre. What improvement could be effected by such a sum, which he supposed would include the expense of surveying by the staff of the Board of Works, which in Ireland was very heavy? He thought this plan the most complete bubble a Government had ever brought before Parliament. He was naturally led from this subject to the effect of the small holdings in Ireland. He did not know what the size of the holdings on these reclaimed lands was to be; if he could gather anything from the speech of the noble Lord, he seemed to think the smaller the better. Of all the astounding doctrines ever laid down by a Minister of the Crown professing to know the condition of Ireland, the assertion that small holdings were not disadvantageous to the country was the most extraordinary; it was only fit to go with the bubble project of reclaiming the waste lands. Had the noble Lord ever had any conversation on this subject with his noble Colleague the Secretary for Foreign Affairs? That noble Lord could tell him something of the effect of small holdings; if he had read even the Earl of Devon's blue book, he could have drawn such a deduction; the prosperity of a country did not arise from its ratio to surface, but its ratio to capital. The noble Lord had instanced Armagh as a prosperous county; there were small holdings in Armagh, but it was a wealthy county, that was able to employ its surplus population in manufactures; but this was not the case in the south and west of Ireland. The noble Lord had committed, to say the least of it, a manifest blunder in saying that small holdings were not injurious. He believed, on the contrary, that the small holdings were at the root of half their present evils. The population had become so dense and crowded that no food but the potato could have furnished them with subsistence. It was very well for Sir R. Kane to tell them that Ireland could support 17,000,000 of people; at present nothing could support the population of Tipperary but the potato. He knew one estate in his locality that had been in the market for years, for which no one would offer more than ten years' purchase, because it was eaten out by a cottier tenantry, who not only could not pay a shilling of rent, but were not able to support themselves. He would quote the evidence of Mr. Kincaid, from Lord Devon's Report, as to the condition of an estate belonging to the noble Lord (Lord Palmerston) in Sligo. He said—

> "It was let about seventy years ago in large farms for three lives, or thirty-one years. In one instance, comprising a surface of 1,400 acres, where there were six leases, there were found 280 tenants at the expiration of the leases; other parts divided as low as an acre and a half. Taking the number of occupiers at about 2,000, and the rental at 4,000*l.*, and allowing 1*s.* per diem as the cost of feeding each occupier, and his family gives 100*l.* a day as the outlay necessary to preserve the people; that is to say, the whole rental of 4,000*l.* would be spent in forty days."

Mr. Otway stated in his evidence as to the state of Donegal —

> "Owing to the subdivision of the property, the people were in a state of the most extreme poverty I ever witnessed, most of them emaciated from want, and confined to their beds from want of clothing. The poverty of these people has arisen from the incompetency of the land to afford the means of subsistence to so large a number: they cannot get food enough off it, let alone pay rent out of it."

These were rather strong facts with regard to small holdings, and there was another subject connected with them which the House ought to consider with more discretion than had been evinced by the hon. Member for Coventry. When that hon. Gentleman and others were so eager to force an extension of the poor law on Ireland, they ought to bear in mind that the Bill was only printed on the 29th, and had not yet been circulated in Ireland; if the House were determined to force forward that Bill, contrary to the opinion of the Irish representatives, the least they could do was to give them time to consider it. With reference to the discussion, he was delighted that the hon. Member for Coventry had not found a seconder, and that the discussion would be deferred to a future day. As far as extending out-door relief to the aged, the infirm, and the impotent, he thought the opinions of all the Irish Members would be unanimous; but when they came to give out-door relief to the able-bodied in Ireland, he asked them to remember that circumstances were very different in that country from what they were in England. An eminent pathologist defined the cholera to be "a disease that began with death;" the proposal for giving out-door relief to the able-bodied in Ireland might be called "a revolution commencing by confiscation." So low was the standard of comfort in Ireland, so philosophical was the resolve of the Irish peasant to want but little and to do with still less; that if they once instituted the system of out-door relief in Ireland, without the workhouse test, he was confident they would extinguish the last spark of self-reliance and independence in the Irish peasant's bosom. That was a moral objection to the proposal; but there were economic objections of equal force. The rental of Ireland was calculated at 10,000,000*l.*; the number of the population entitled to relief would be 2,500,000; who, at 1*s.* 9*d.* a-week per head, would, in a year, require 11,375,000*l.* Having thus absorbed the whole rental of Ireland, what would be the consequence? That the whole of this burden must fall upon England, and the English people. The Poor Law Commissioners, who reported on the effect of a system of out-door relief in Ireland, at the time the poor law was passed, said—

> "As the parish of Cholesbury became to other parishes in England, so, we are persuaded, would very many of the parishes in Ireland be to the residue at the end of a year, from the commencement of any system for charging the land indefinitely with the support of the whole labouring part of the community; and as these parishes must shortly bring down all others to their level, the whole of Ireland would shortly have to lean on Great Britain for support."

But he contended that this was not only a landlords' question; hon. Gentlemen were very anxious to put the screw on the landlords. To a certain extent he thought they were right; for he could not say the landlords had in all cases done their duty; but it was also a tenant-farmers' question. In Ireland the landlord paid half the poor-rate, and the tenant the other. If there was to be any experiment, let them have the English law at once and entirely; here the tenant bore some of the burden; but, from his own experience, he knew that the cottier tenantry had the whole of the rate paid for them. They had been told that a poor law would have saved them 5,000,000*l.* or 6,000,000*l.*; but he denied that a poor law was of any avail in a time of actual famine. In 1597, shortly after the passing of the celebrated Act of Elizabeth, there was a famine in England, and it was impossible to make the parish relief meet the difficulty of the time. Again, in 1800, there was another famine; and a Committee of that House declared the poor law to be insufficient under the circumstances, and passed other and extraordinary measures of relief. Had a poor law been in active operation, it would not have been of any avail in staving off the calamity. In a plan for the regeneration of Ireland, the noble Lord had made a great omission in not entertaining some scheme—not of emigration, the word was unpopular in Ireland—but of systematic colonization. He had hoped the talent and ability of the Judge Advocate (Mr. C. Buller) would have been called into exercise on this subject; the hon. and learned Gentleman had given great attention to it, and he had thought a Government that included him would have been prepared with some plan of colonization, to forward which the landlords would cheerfully have submitted to a tax. It should not have been done in a petty manner; but, conducted under the auspices of the ministers of religion, he had no doubt it would have been extensively carried out by the younger branches of families in Ireland. Another omission of the noble Lord's was not looking at the Irish system of grand juries. A great many of the evils of Ireland had been increased by that system, and he thought that measures of reform which omitted a total reform of the grand jury laws was not worth the consideration of the House. He could assure the noble Lord he had not made these remarks on the measures of the Government in any bad spirit; he gave it full credit for its anxiety to ameliorate the condition of Ireland; but, taking those measures as a whole, they would not sufficiently elevate the condition of the peasantry of that country. It appeared to him that the noble Lord's speech was, to use the words of an eloquent writer, rather "the enunciation of a sentiment, than the declaration of a policy." The noble Lord had told them, that at some future time—possibly when the pressure was sufficiently great—he should be prepared to do other things for Ireland; he told them they must not despair, and had drawn an eloquent comparison between the peasant "idling on the mountain side in Tipperary," and his brother working hard in Liverpool or London. But the noble Lord had avoided touching the root of the calamity, the cause of the evil; why was one man so idle in Tipperary, and why was the other so industrious in London or Liverpool? The small holdings of Ireland caused the difference between them. The small holdings had totally destroyed the labouring class in Ireland. Every man there was a farmer, and as soon as his crop was in the ground he had nothing to do, or perhaps he went to look for work; as a class there were no agricultural labourers in Ireland. The man who was idle in Tipperary would be industrious in London, because, in London, his work was wanted and well paid for; in Ireland it was not wanted, or if wanted was very poorly paid for; but if their labour was rewarded, there was no description of toil the Irish peasantry would not undertake. A more industrious, persevering, honest people, he would defy the world to produce. The subject of absenteeism had been alluded to; but there was one class of proprietors he thought much worse than absentees—they were the nominal owners of land, men who neither enjoyed the rights, nor were able to perform the duties of property; whose estates were at the mercy of some agent, who exacted the last penny from the tenants, to be spent by some person abroad. This class was the curse of Ireland, and this class the noble Lord proposed to increase. Was the House to prop up this falling and effete system by giving loans to these men, who were of no use to themselves or to any one else? The noble Lord must look to the root of these evils. He might depend on it that the day was fast coming when he must look into the subject of Irish entails with a view of breaking them. There was another subject connected with the Government of Ireland the House would do well to take into consideration; he was convinced the whole system of the Irish executive Government must be changed. They must make the office of Lord Lieutenant a reality; they must make him a real king as far as delegated power was concerned, or they must abolish it altogether. The House ought to consider too the importance of the Parliament meeting, at stated intervals, at Dublin Castle. What was the use of sending an effective Lord Lieutenant to Ireland—and he acknowledged the efficiency of the noble Lord who now held that office—if he was only to sit behind the cumbrous vehicle of Irish Government, in his state livery, merely to sound the horn when some English state-coachman was driving them over roads made impracticable and dangerous by the Board of Public Works, or by the proverbial paviours of "another place?" If the Lord Lieutenant was of any service at all, he ought to have a seat in the Cabinet. Ireland ought not to be left to those well-meaning men who would probably do a great deal of harm while intending to do a great deal of good; they must reform that system of government if they wished the Union to continue what it ought to be. He had studiously avoided political subjects; at the same time he had his doubts whether the noble Lord had not let slip a great opportunity of bringing forward a real plan for the redemption of Ireland; he passed over that, but could not resume his seat without saying, unless certain parties who never showed any great zeal for religion, except when, according to Burke, it was employed in mortifying their neighbours — unless they divested themselves of the *odium theologicum* that rankled in their breasts, the union between the countries would never be anything but one of parchment. The assistance rendered by England to Ireland in times of emergency could not be received with gratitude, because there was always evidence that, in some quarters, the good was granted with an effort. There should be no pharisaical pride in affording such relief; there should no anathema of the tongue to lessen the merit of the charity. They had not shown that charity which "beareth all things, believeth all things, hopeth all things, endureth all things;" they had manifested only that spirit which enacted the penal laws, that spirit which would echo and call back the errors and the barbarisms of the 16th century. If they would feed the starving, they must delay the work of making converts. Those who were but as sounding brass and tinkling cymbal should remember the Universal Prayer:—

> "Let not this weak, unknowing hand,
> Presume thy bolts to throw,
> And deal damnation round the land
> On each I judge thy foe."

The noble Lord must search in the page of history for the records of England's misgovernment in Ireland, and for the evidence of the evils which it was now incumbent on them to avoid. M. de Beaumont, a modern historian, wrote thus on this point:—

> "Assuredly the spite of England against Ireland has produced the most terrible and iniquitous acts ever perpetrated by one people on another. For my part, I find no reason to accuse the justice of God in these cruel wars and sanguinary controversies; I only see that the forgetfulness of a

single principle costs mankind much blood and much iniquity; and in the frightful desolation I perceive the evidence of the great truths which are important to the happiness of nations, viz., that there are certain principles which cannot be mistaken with impunity, the violation of which entails the most lasting and fatal consequences. This is the true interpretation of the visitations which have occurred."

This country owed a vast debt to Ireland for ages of misrule, and that debt was not to be cancelled by mere pecuniary compensation. The only way in which they could meet the responsibility was for that House to pass laws in a wide, large, and comprehensive spirit—laws which should be free both from sectarian intolerance and parochial bigotry. Thus only could they cancel that debt; these were the things the Crown could grant, and these were the laws which Parliament should enact.

Mr. W. SMITH O'BRIEN would avail himself of the present opportunity to address the House, as it appeared to be their wish that Members who had any observations to offer should do so in the present stage of the Bill. He did not think he could do better than follow the order of the speech of the noble Member for London. The noble Lord had exhibited forcible pictures of the past and the present state of Ireland, and had referred to the melancholy topics so often brought before the House, for the purpose of showing how extensive was the misery of that country. But he had forgotten to draw a deduction which appeared perfectly obvious to him (Mr. O'Brien), and that was that the state of things in Ireland was the result of forty-six years of union with England. He had forgotten also to draw a contrast between the representations made at the time of the Union of the increasing wealth and property of Ireland since 1782, and issue of the promises of glorious and halcyon days to come after she had been united with England. He would, however, reserve his deductions to another time, and come to the subject before the House. He could not blame the right hon. Gentleman the Secretary for Ireland for having underrated the extent of the calamity consequent on the failure of the potato crop, for he had fallen into a similar error; indeed every one had done so. He thought that the estimate of three-fourths was too small, and he knew it was much greater in the south of Ireland. It was not enough to say, while calculating the money value destroyed, that so many acres of potatoes were lost, but they must take into consideration the value of the grain required to replace them. On this basis it appeared to him that the whole amount could not be less than 16,000,000*l.*; and if to this were added the loss sustained in the offal of the potato for feeding pigs and cattle, and the loss from rise of price and other causes, they could not calculate the actual value at a lower sum than between 20,000,000*l.* and 30,000,000*l.* In what way was this loss to be met? Was it possible that in a country situated like Ireland they could repair the evil in one year? It was clear that, whether the duty of relief devolved upon England or upon Ireland, the calamity should be viewed as they would view a war—as an event calling for an appeal to extraordinary resources and extraordinary exertions. With respect to the question, whether or not England, as a portion of the empire, should share in the burden which had devolved on the empire, he was inclined to leave the decision as to the correctness or incorrectness of that principle to the English Members. He would content himself with reminding the House, that had the negotiations between the French and English Governments respecting the Montpensier marriage ended in a war, Ireland, which had had no voice in the council, would have been dragged into that war, and would have been obliged to contribute to the taxes, while her sons would have been compelled to contribute their valour and their blood. And if the empire, in such a cause, was called upon to share in fighting the quarrels of one particular people, why, in the calamity now existing, should Ireland be required to depend only on her own efforts? He had heard it proclaimed in that House that the property should sustain the poverty of Ireland; but he had no hesitation in asserting that the Imperial Parliament were bound to make a national effort to alleviate the misery of the inhabitants of one section of the united kingdom. Before the Union, Ireland would and could have relieved herself; before the Union an Irish Ministry would have been enforced to till the country, that, no matter what was the calamity, no human being, acknowledged as a subject, should perish of starvation. How different to-day! They had seen Ministers successively rise in their places, and, cowed and bewildered, plead that they had to resign themselves to the alternative of beholding masses of the population of Ireland dying for want of food. He did not think the noble Lord had exculpated his Government, or that he had given any reason why the measures he now proposed had not been adopted in November last. It did not appear to him either that the Chancellor of the Exchequer had shown why the use of grain was not expressly prohibited in distilleries, nor was he satisfied with his admission that the introduction of sugar was intended, not so much as a benefit to Ireland, as a boon to the West Indies. For his own part he had been delighted to hear the proposition of the hon. Member for Newark, the more so because it came from an English Member. Ministers told the people of Ireland that they could not interfere in the supply of food without loss to the retail trade. He had been accustomed to admire political economy until he heard this miserable perversion of its doctrines. He should have thought it was the business of political economy to teach the Government that a people subject to their care should not die of starvation, so long as means of supply existed. With respect to the purchase of food in the home market, was it not obvious that the Government, by entering the home market, must give an artificial value to all the corn in the country, thereby stimulating and rewarding speculation? He could not understand how their doing so was consistent with political economy. He believed it would have been in the power of the Government so to regulate measures as to prevent one human being in Ireland from dying of starvation. He denied that proper Government interference would have had the effect of superseding private enterprise. During the Administration of the right hon. Baronet the Member for Tamworth they found that the mercantile enterprise of the country was not checked, though the Government carried, even further perhaps than was desirable, the principle of throwing large supplies into the market for the sake of the poor. Sales to relief committees, and by relief committees to the destitute inhabitants, taking place where the ordinary circumstances of trade failed altogether, could not operate unduly against the interests of the country. As matters now stood, the merchants of Ireland had been enjoying prices above the regular standard, and having the character of monopoly rates. There was either a universal deficiency or not; if there was not, it would be found that the present prices had been speculative, and that there had been great exaggeration as to the extent of the deficiency. He knew that it was so stated by some authorities on this question. He would not himself express any opinion; but if there were no deficiency, Government had been blameable in allowing prices to run so high, when they might have been kept down. On the other hand, if there had been and were a really formidable deficiency, he said it was the duty of Government to interfere not only as regarded the supply of grain, but every other kind of food. It was their duty to go and hunt in every part of the world for any description of food that might be made available to the wants of the country. He would suggest for the consideration of the Government whether it might not be advisable that supplies of meat should be laid in, so as to be available at the end of the season. Almost any amount of meat was obtainable in South America at 1½*d.* per pound; large supplies might also be procured from the Falkland Islands and the Cape of Good Hope. It was worthy the consideration of Government whether the public stock of food might not be augmented with great advantage by supplies of this kind. He now came to the question of employment; and here he thought the noble Lord had failed of exculpating himself altogether. The noble Lord said there were 500,000 persons now employed on the roads at an enormous expense for every week; but he threw the responsibility not on the Government who introduced the law, but on the Irish people and the Irish Members. They had merely made the proposition; but the Government brought in a Bill within a few days of the end of the Session. The Irish Members were then absent; he admitted they ought to have been present; but if they had been present, and had made representations against the Act, the chances were that their representations would have been unavailing. If they had said a word at that period of the Session, there would have been a general outcry against them, "Why, you want to starve the people of Ireland." With respect to himself, he regretted that he had been prevented from coming over again, as he intended, at the end of last Session. He was not aware, until the month of September, of the extent of the calamity; but as soon as he was, he felt it his duty to address a letter through the newspapers to the noble Lord at the head of the Government. He thought the legitimate course would have been to call together Parliament at the earliest possible moment. Nothing had ever surprised him so much as the statement of the Chief

Secretary for Ireland, that he did not think there was any general desire among the people of that country for the convocation of Parliament. A requisition had been signed by a large number of the nobility and gentry throughout that country for the sole object of inducing Government to call Parliament together in November; and if this were refused, efforts were made to get an assembly of the country gentlemen to meet in Dublin. Ministers were exceedingly reluctant that such a convention of the Irish gentry should take place, and thought they would get out of the difficulty by one of the most unconstitutional measures ever taken—the suppression of the statute by a letter of the Secretary for Ireland. The Irish gentry wanted reproductive instead of unproductive works. They pointed out the way in which this should be brought about; but their suggestion was not adopted by the Irish Government. It was found almost impossible to act under Mr. Labouchere's letter. The gentry and people of Ireland had no other alternative than to proceed under the law called the Labour-rate Act; in endeavouring to carry that out, they sent applications from various parts of the country to the Treasury to be allowed to expend portions of the money on works that would yield returns. In Limerick, Clare, and other counties, applications were made by presentment sessions, through the Board of Works, to the Treasury, that they might be allowed to undertake works which would yield a return; but the Treasury put a veto on all these proceedings. The same occurred with respect to drainage. At the presentment sessions, they were very anxious to open the courses of rivers and tributaries; but this was vetoed also. In short, every proposal for reproductive works was vetoed by the Treasury; and no alternative remained but the continued employment of the people on unproductive and often useless works. The noble Lord proposed that one half the expense of these should be defrayed out of the Imperial Exchequer. He ventured to say he expressed the opinion of every man in Ireland, when he asserted that if this money had been expended on useful works, the whole would have been repaid. The noble Lord had submitted a measure providing for the relief of the poor, by which the system of making roads was to be abandoned, and the people were to be fed by means of rations. If the people were confined to making roads, it was quite clear that, whether they were labourers or occupiers of small portions of ground, they could not till the lands; therefore this alternative, however bad in principle, was the only one that was left. He hoped the right hon. Gentleman would see that it was made effective. Government proposed a very large extension of the principle of the Irish Poor Law. He himself had always been favourable to a poor law; he did not think the noble Lord, when he referred to the working of the existing poor law, treated them quite fairly. He would not refer to the Castlebar union; but the noble Lord forgot that at this moment there was in almost every union in Ireland a very much larger number of persons receiving relief than the workhouse was originally built to accommodate. When he (Mr. W. S. O'Brien) proposed out-door relief, the noble Lord and the Government resisted it. He did not entertain the apprehensions felt by some Gentlemen with respect to a poor law; he thought there could be no question whatever that it was long since the duty of the Government to enact such a law. But he felt bound to endeavour to impress on the House that no law which could be enacted was equal to contend with such a calamity as now afflicted Ireland; even if it absorbed the whole rental of this year, some of the people must necessarily starve, for in many districts it was known that it would require two or three years' rental to enable the people to get over their difficulties. Therefore it was a mistake to suppose, if they had an extensive poor law, that the dangers of famine could be avoided. He admitted that a poor law taken alone would be confiscation. The noble Lord had promised them, when that Act passed, that the poor law for Ireland should not be unaccompanied by other measures. The poor law passed, but subsidiary measures had been forgotten. On the present occasion the noble Lord proposed to accompany his measures by others which would tend to absorb the surplus labour of the country. Let the House remember the position in which we should be placed after the Bill passed. After next harvest there would be very nearly as great a pressure on the surplus labour of the country as at the present moment: they must make some provision for absorbing that labour. Nothing could be more unjust than the charges made by the *Morning Chronicle* and various other papers against the Irish landlords in reference to the Million Act and other statutes. These journals forgot that they had no power under the provisions of those laws; they were precluded altogether from acting, and therefore could not have imitated the example proposed to them amidst the cheers of the House—that of the Scottish proprietors. The noble Lord now proposed to give facilities to the Irish landlords to borrow extensively under that Act. He thought this a very proper thing to do; but when it was represented as a great boon, he would ask what it was but simply a loan upon terms that were not extraordinarily beneficial to them, and would be ordinarily remunerative to the State. It would make a fresh charge upon the property of every man who borrowed money under the Act: whatever amount of loan might be so advanced would override all other charges, and become, in fact, a land-tax. He would wish to suggest a matter of practical detail, on which too much stress could not be laid; it was, that the amount of charge necessary for the purpose of inspection, to ascertain first whether money should be advanced, and afterwards how labour should be applied, might be defined. Assuming that it was good policy to encourage as many as possible to apply for loans of money, that the whole produce of the soil might be augmented, that object would be defeated unless only a small per centage charge were imposed. He now came to a proposition which was not dealt with so fairly as it might have been by the hon. Member for Wycombe—he meant a part of the scheme which, in his opinion, entirely deserved the sanction of the House, the Million Fund for reclaiming waste lands. He believed that numberless acres might be beneficially reclaimed. He knew land not now producing a shilling per acre, on which thousands of the people might be employed, and which would yield, in all contingencies of the seasons, ample crops. He was perfectly satisfied that this part of the Ministerial scheme would confer a great benefit on the people of Ireland, not only by employing as many as the improvement of the land would require, but also by the creation hereafter of a class of small proprietors, of whom they had very few in Ireland. This was a class conferring great advantages on every country where they existed; and he believed it might be created in Ireland without imposing any difficulty whatever on the tenant. The noble Lord intended to introduce, at an early period, a measure which would have the effect of enabling proprietors to escape from the difficulties under which they now laboured, by selling portions of their estates: that measure, if satisfactory, would no doubt have the entire approbation of the House. The noble Lord also proposed to introduce a measure for the commutation of tenures, and to make leases renewable for ever. For that measure he offered the noble Lord his thanks, as calculated to effect extensive good. With respect to the subject of the fisheries, the noble Lord should remember that it had been over and over again pressed upon the attention of the Legislature during the last twenty years. Some steps had been taken in the establishment of curing-houses, which were most useful to the fishermen, and had showed what might be done. It ought, moreover, to be considered how far Irish cured fish might be made available for the purposes of food in that country. It seemed as if it might be used in workhouses and gaols, and possibly also for the Irish Catholic soldiers; and if so, the operation of encouraging the fisheries would be a double one, by providing a market for the commodity, of which a supply had been created, and, on the other hand, do something towards diminishing the pressure upon the present stock of food. He had regretted to hear the noble Lord speak so discouragingly in regard to emigration, for although he concurred with the noble Lord that there had been much exaggeration in the expectations formed by some of relieving the country of millions by this means, and knew well that no more emigrants should be sent to the colonies than the colonies could conveniently receive, he yet thought that something more might be done than the noble Lord had held out hopes of, From a conversation he had held with the hon. Member for Gateshead (Mr. Hutt), he believed that not more than 200,000 at the most could be sent out to all the colonies in the present year; but, nevertheless, that would do something towards relieving the pressure. The noble Lord, in his enumeration of measures for the absorption of labour into the land, had omitted to mention that most important one which had been so long proposed by the hon. Member for Rochdale. He thought that a good law, to secure to the tenant compensation for the improvements made upon his farm, would do more than all the rest put together. The proposition had been for ten years before the Government, and it had been the subject of two Bills, besides that of the hon. Member for Rochdale; and he thought it too bad that at this period no measure of the kind had been proposed. In regard to railways in Ireland, he (Mr. S. O'Brien) tendered his thanks to the noble Member for Lynn for the intention he had expressed of taking up that subject. He was persuaded that advances for that purpose might safely be made without the loss of a single guinea; and it was under the present circumstances of the country that the application of such a stimulus became particularly necessary. He believed that, in many cases of railways in Ireland—he did not say in all—most unquestionable collateral security could be given for such advances. He thought also it would be wise in the Government to enable counties to construct railways on their own account, on the security of the county rates. Before he sat down, he wished briefly to allude to one other subject—a most important one. It was his decided opinion that, until some good measure were passed to induce the great absentee proprietors of Ireland to perform their duty, there was no chance of attaining that state of social felicity which the noble Lord imagined he had at his command. He believed it to be perfectly impossible for any people to sustain such an enormous drain upon their resources as that which Ireland now endured from this cause, and the capital of which he estimated at 4,000,000*l*. These persons should be compelled to make that country some compensation for the evils she endured, of which they were the cause; and he asked whether those who so loudly denounced the resident landlords of Ireland, and who devoted, he supposed, the whole of their time in mitigating the sufferings of their own poor neighbours, but receiving the while large remittances from Ireland, were to be allowed to escape. This was an occasion which, beyond all others, required deep consideration as to the mode in which the national resources could be applied to useful objects, whether in public works or in objects of local or national character. There were various objects of this kind, hitherto neglected, to which the attention of the Government ought to be applied, but into the details of which there was no time to enter on the present occasion. He would, therefore, content himself with briefly adverting to some expressions at the conclusion of the speech of the noble Lord. The noble Lord eulogized the virtues of self-reliance and co-operation, and so far he agreed with him. But when the noble Lord recommended the Irish to aid themselves, and then Heaven would aid them; and when he recommended them to manage and regulate their own affairs; he seemed to have forgotten that to that people, bound as they were hand and foot to England, his words could sound but as a bitter mockery.

Mr. ROEBUCK said, as an English representative he was desirous of making some observations on the measures brought forward by the noble Lord; and he was the more anxious to do so, because if none but Members for Ireland were permitted to complain, and to lay before the House statements of misery and want, one might fancy that the misery and the want extended not beyond the shores of Ireland, and that relief was needed only by the unhappy population of that country. Before he finished, he hoped he should make it clear that there were others besides the people of Ireland who were also suffering; but who suffered in a different spirit, and who, without complaining of the misconduct of the Government, laboured industriously to alleviate their sufferings by their own unaided energies. They did not come to that House, and cast themselves in abject, and as appeared to him almost helpless impotence upon them, but strove manfully and energetically to relieve themselves. It might be said, and it had been intimated, that any description which he might give of the position of the different classes in Ireland, would be dictated by a malignant spirit. In answer to that inuendo he had to inform them that he meant to institute a severe inquiry into some of the classes of that country, utterly careless of any imputations; because he had a duty to perform, and he knew he would be supported against all such imputations by the feeling and opinion of the people of this country. The noble Lord at the head of the Government, in legislating for Ireland, had not restricted himself to the present emergency, but had discovered that there were other measures which it would be desirable to pass, the object of which was not to relieve the immediate distress, but, as the noble Lord phrased it, for the regeneration of that country. The noble Lord wished to refashion—to reconstruct, as it were—the character and habits of the Irish people; and concluded his observations with some mysterious declaration of what he would do if those measures passed into a law. With the permission of the House, he would consider them in the order in which they had been laid down. First, as to those intended for relief of present distress; and next, those intended for the amelioration of the character of the people; and he would also endeavour to touch what lay in the noble Lord's mind when he made that mysterious declaration. In attempting to alleviate the present distress, it behoved them to consider well the condition of the people in Ireland. The first thing which struck him in contemplating the condition of the Irish people was, the broad distinction which runs between two classes in that country. A large majority of the people in Ireland were living as a labouring population upon the land; and there was another class —proprietors, so called, of the land — who were the landlords of that country. The House was asked to save the population from starvation, and the landlords from ruin. Two sets of measures were proposed —one having for its object the relief of the large labouring population, and the other to rescue from ruin and absolute pecuniary destruction the so-called Irish landlords. Now the condition of the labouring population was habitually one bordering on starvation: they consumed the lowest species of food which was used by men in any civilized community, and reduced moreover to the lowest quantity of even that unwholesome and inefficient food: they lived upon small holdings of land, not, as in other countries, living upon the wages of labour, but in that most mischievous of all conditions of man, living upon their own labour, unaided by the intervention of capital or skill, but directly and immediately applied to the soil. The return to their labour was necessarily small, because it was so applied without the intervention of capital or skill: it was mere brute force applied by numbers to the land, and yielding the smallest return that a fertile soil could produce. In this condition the people had multiplied exceedingly, and their multiplication had been aided by the proximity of England. In spite of all discouragements, some capital, however small, did dribble into Ireland from England; and these small sums had but one effect—that of increasing the numbers of the people, without remedying their condition. Thus the people had ever been in a chronic state of disease; and the present symptoms only indicated an acute form of the same disease. Such was the condition of the labouring classes. For them he had every sympathy; but he believed the course that was taken would only perpetuate the distress and extend the misery which it was the object to relieve. He turned from the consideration of those classes to that other body who had approached that House, and, in terms loud, and almost commanding, had demanded redemption from ruin. He did not allude to all the landlords of Ireland; but he took upon himself to say, that the nominal proprietors of land in Ireland were not the true landlords of that country: they were but the nominal landlords; the real landlords were the mortgagees and the tax gatherers. Without the wealth to support the pride and desire of outside show which often accompanied landed proprietorship, the Irish landlords were always on the verge of ruin. Not the masters of their own estates, they were obliged to live from hand to mouth — craving for everything, grasping at everything, and totally unable to perform the duties which devolved upon them as the proprietors of the soil. Now, when a demand for relief was made on their behalf, he was entitled to inquire into the circumstances of their case. Unhappily, the landlords of Ireland —or that class who were nominally so— had been in reality, to a very great extent, the cause of the very distress with which the country was now afflicted. They had been a favoured class in that House. The whole of the legislation for Ireland had been moulded and fashioned invariably with a view to the interests of the landlords. That House had unfortunately passed over the multitudes of poor in Ireland, that they might give power and efficiency to the wishes and feelings of the landed proprietors, who had so mischievously employed the great powers entrusted to them by the law as to have worked themselves to the brink of ruin, and the whole body of the people to the brink of starvation. It was impossible to question the state of facts. Nothing was clearer or more distinct than the gradation of their progress. The general character of the landed gentry in Ireland some years ago was that of a joyous, reckless, hospitable, prodigality — no thrift, no prudence, no economy; they inevitably got into debt, and their embarrassments became so numerous and so perplexing, that it became to them a matter of the most painful solicitude how their present wants might be supplied. This was their great thought, their sole ambition; and the only expedient which promised a solution to the difficulty was, the subdivision and parcelling out of their land. And, accordingly, the land was subdivided into an infinity of parcels, and one poor man was seen bidding against another with an eagerness that showed that he regarded the holding as his only chance of livelihood. To hold by that land, they would give or promise any thing. The consequence of this competition, as far as the landlord was affected, was, that rents were considerably higher in Ireland than in England. Notwithstanding the greater poverty of the Irish population, the returns to the landlord were in reality higher in Ireland than in England ; and what was the worst feature in the case was, that of all this money, so given to the landlords, no portion came back to the soil, as it did in England, by a due regard being paid to the improvement of the estate, the enrichment of the soil, and the benefiting of the people's condition. The first object with landlords, after receiving their rents, was to pay some portion of their debts, the next to satisfy the tax-gatherer; and they had then to consider how they might manage to live in their accustomed splendour. Such was the pitiable condition of the Irish landlords, taking them as a whole. But there were exceptions. These exceptions were to be looked for amongst the absentee proprietors. The large English proprietor, who was an absentee, was in reality the most beneficent landlord in Ireland. Hon. Members from Ireland came down to that House, like the hon. Member for Limerick, and talked about the mischief that resulted from absenteeism. They complained of such landlords as the Marquess of Lansdowne — [Mr. O'Brien : No, no !] — and yet the fact was beyond all possibility of dispute, that the nominal proprietors, those who stayed at home and lived on the soil, were, in the majority of cases, the very worst landlords in all Ireland. The Irish population was absolutely bound to the soil. Send them from their holdings, to which they adhered with marvellous tenacity, and they were unable to exist. They were lost—they were utterly undone. This resulted from that most pernicious system —the parcelling out and minute subdivision of the land. And yet of all the remarks which fell the other night from the noble Lord at the head of the Government, that which amazed him (Mr. Roebuck) most was his observation on this subject. That one who had paid so much attention as the noble Lord to the condition of Ireland should have been prepared to state in his scheme for the regeneration of that country, that the subdivision of the soil was not an evil in Ireland, did certainly surprise him more than he could describe. The noble Lord had instanced the happy and comfortable condition of the population in the northern districts of Ireland, as attesting that subdivision was no evil; but the noble Lord went on a false premise. The comfortable population to whom he alluded were persons who, independently of their holdings, were engaged in trade or manufacture—men, in fact, who had their small parcels of land as much for recreation as for anything else; and not, as in the south and west of Ireland, wretched beings, who had no earthly hope nor means of subsistence other than what they derived from their miserable little holdings. The noble Lord might as well have instanced the case of London. Look round London, and see what minute subdivision of land there was there. There was scarcely so much as two or three acres held as a whole by any one proprietor; and yet would any one say that that was a proof that the parcelling out of land was not mischievous? The fact was, that the people of London were engaged in various trades and manufactures, and had not to rely on their holdings for the means of subsistence. He hesitated not to designate as the "monster grievance" of Ireland that unfortunate system of dividing the land into petty holdings, from which the unhappy occupiers could not be removed; for in truth and in fact, they were more the possessors of the land than the landlords themselves. If such was the condition of the people of Ireland, and such the condition of the land, what was the Legislature to do ? Was it possible for them by any means so to fashion their legislation as to make it the interest of some class of persons to watch over and prevent that constantly increasing division of the land ? If the Legislature could not do this, they might as well throw down their hands at once, and give up the task. But if they could make it the interest of those who would be the possessors of the soil to watch over and protect it, by preventing the mischiefs of the subdivision system, then indeed they might still hope to be able to regenerate the country. This it was that the House should endeavour to effect. In his opinion it was completely within their power to do that; but he would protest against all attempts on the part of the Government to become a land-jobber, a corn-jobber, or a road-maker. All these things were beyond the province of a Government. The noble Lord had very profoundly said that no people could be fed by a Government. He would take upon himself to say that no people could be directed in the application of their industry and capital by any Government. All that a Government could fairly be called upon to do was to protect life and property—to give the means of, and to make easy and certain, the transmission of property—to make secure the title to property—and, as subsidiary to the protection of life and property, to raise the condition of the people by education. But no Government in the world ever exceeded that without doing great and immediate mischief. In attestation of the truth of this proposition, he might refer to the operations of the Government for the last four months in Ireland. The correspondence with the Board of Works in Ireland had been that morning laid upon the Table of the House; and he had already managed to get through the perusal of a great portion of it. Such an exhibition of reckless mad expenditure as the book presented, he never before witnessed. But it had occurred in spite of the Government. The moment that Government set itself up to be the buyer of labour, labourers flocked to them from every direction, and the legitimate occupations of industry were immediately and completely superseded. Not alone from all districts of Ireland, but even from Liverpool and Manchester, men, forsaking their legitimate avocations, thronged in crowds to take the Queen's money; and the consequence was, that direful as the present distress was, there was a prospect of absolute starvation next year by reason of the difficulty of getting labour for the purposes of agriculture. Now all this had resulted from the Government having overstepped the legitimate limits of its duties. It had undertaken a task for which no Government was competent. It had taken on itself to be the provider of labour and food for a whole people, and it had most signally failed. Nay, more, it had done positive injury. It had demoralized the people, and taught them this most mischievous lesson, that if they could only make it appear to Government that distress was general, there was no necessity for them to exert themselves at all. The consequences to England, moreover, would be most fatally injurious. They had to look to the morality and comfort of their own labouring poor; and was it not to be apprehended that the moral pestilence that had been created in Ireland might perhaps find its way to the shores of this country? Was it not very probable that the English labourer would complain that he should be compelled to pay taxes, and that he should be bowed to the earth with toil, in order that the Irish people might be fed out of his means? He could tell the House that the feeling was spreading far and wide in England, that in this respect a great injustice was done to his patient and forbearing countrymen. And were not the representatives of the English people in that House to give unfettered expression to their indignation at this on the part of the people of England? Were they calmly to witness the gathering of a pestilence, and yet to make no effort to avert it? He, for one, would not be deterred by any insinuations, or by any terrors, from boldly maintaining the interests of his poorer fellow-countrymen; and in their name he solemnly protested against the whole scheme of the noble Lord at the head of the Government. He protested against any attempt by that House to relieve the landlords from the consequences of their own misconduct and that of their progenitors—he protested against procuring constant employment for the Irish people, or any portion of them—he protested against devoting the hard-earned capital of the English people to the project of draining the wild lands of Ireland — and, last of all, he protested most energetically against what was called the new Irish poor law. That a poor law indeed! A few undigested clauses, giving powers to certain persons in Ireland, which the great body of the Irish people would not be able to comprehend. Had they, by their poor law, given to the people of Ireland a necessary right to relief? If they had not done this, they had done nothing. If they gave a distinct and legal right to relief, they must give it in some place. Then there must be a regular law of settlement, and a regular law of removal. Then there must be a complete and regular machinery for the administration of the Act; in fact, a poor law built up from the bottom, the right of relief being the grand fundamental condition, and then a superstructure equal in proportion to the English poor law, and producing the same effects as those produced by the English poor law. If the Ministers were wise, they would take advantage of the golden opportunity which, notwithstanding, or rather (to speak more correctly) by reason of the disasters of the times, was now presented to them, to tax the land of Ireland with the great duty of supporting the poor of Ireland. But then, what measure ought to be introduced? In one word, and to avoid all circumlocution, let them introduce the English poor law. If it was good for England, it must be good for Ireland. Let them introduce that law with its machinery, and let it be at once the steadfast and certain law of the country. And let them not stop here. Let them introduce a series of searching reforms into the whole real property law of that country; let them at once make easy the transmission and sale of estates; and above all, let them make good the titles of estates. There should be no tenderness on the subject. Tenderness to the landlords would be cruelty to the people. But he was far from saying that they ought to shut their eyes to all the evils afflicting Ireland, except such as had reference to the relation between landlord and tenant. Ireland had been an ill-governed and an ill-treated country. The injustice of England was recoiling on herself. He acknowledged it; but when hon. Members displayed a willingness to attack Gentlemen on his side of the House, it would be well for them to remember that no proposal had ever been made in that House to grant power to the Irish people and to extend their privileges, that had not been steadfastly supported by Gentlemen on that side—yes, by the very men who were now standing up against the demands of the Irish landlords. For his own part, he could safely assert, that with the single exception of one measure—a measure which he was in his conscience convinced would injure Ireland herself more than England, namely, a repeal of the Union—no proposal had ever been made to extend any of the franchises of the Irish people, that had not invariably obtained his steady and unswerving support. But to return to the proposition under consideration. There was no instance in which the Irish people had so keenly felt the grinding oppression of England as in that of religion. It was wholly hopeless for that House to attempt the regeneration of the Irish character, if that memorial of grinding oppression still remained for every agitator to take hold of to stir up the passions of his fellow-countrymen at any moment, whether for good or for evil. As long as that mischief remained, Ireland would be the fruitful source of discord. This was a question which affected the happiness of the Irish people. They were about to attempt the reconstruction of their character, and the improvement of their condition; but all the efforts of the Legislature would be unavailing, if they were to shrink from touching the great evil of the social position in Ireland. As long as that House should continue the Irish Church Establishment as it now was in Ireland, so long it would be hopeless to attempt any regeneration of that country. He did not say this in any spirit of religious bigotry. He had no apprehension from, nor any antipathy to, Catholics, as opposed to Protestants. The usual feelings connected with those words entered not into his mind. He looked on them both with the same eyes, with the same kindliness and forbearance; but he could not refrain from calling attention to this fact, that they had left the Irish priests in that condition which gave them a direct interest in maintaining the present unhappy condition of their country. He warned the noble Lord against any attempt on the part of his Government, or of any Government, against making a State provision for the Irish clergy; for certain he was, that any Government that would attempt such a thing, would not have twenty-fours' tenure of office. But there were plans of a wise and feasible kind which might be adopted, for putting the Irish clergy in a very different position from that which they now occupied. If they were to do away with the laws of mortmain, and to permit every Catholic priest with a parish to acquire land, by gift or otherwise, to the amount of 300*l.* a year, many years would not elapse before every parish priest in Ireland would be endowed with that sum; and when appointed to his parish, he would have entered into recognizance to the tune of 300*l.* per annum for the preservation of the peace. There was another question, to which allusion was occasionally made—the repeal of the Union. He, for one, was anxious to give the Irish people the power to govern themselves. He was willing to give them full municipal powers, still retaining imperial dominion by a sort of federal union. He would give the power to the municipalities of maintaining what priesthood they pleased. This he was willing to do; but any attempt to find, out of the Imperial Treasury, the funds for the support of the Irish priesthood, he would resist to the last. But unless they were prepared to legislate in some way to relieve them from their present condition, they could have no hope for the establishment of prosperity in that country. It seemed to him that they had done all a Government should have done, all that a Government could do, with this exception, and another exception which he could not now detail—namely, to provide, so far as their means would permit, for the general education of the Irish people. He had remarked that the noble Lord, while he talked of elevating the character of the Irish people, never once alluded to the means of educating them. The means of doing so were in their hands: the revenues of the Irish Church, or such of them as were not necessary for affording spiritual comfort to the members of the Established Church, ought to be applied to the education of the Irish people. When this, the coping-stone, was put to the reform he had mentioned, they would not have those constant appeals from Ireland—which they had heard that night, and which he supposed they would hear for many nights to come—to Government to do something for Ireland. One Gentleman had a plan for draining land, another for public works, another to teach the Irish people to cure fish, another to give them seed-corn, and another to make ditches; in short, it was proposed that the Government was do everything. And the hon. Gentleman opposite, the Member for Limerick (Mr. Smith O'Brien), had stated that evening that it was the business of the Government to go everywhere to obtain food for the Irish people. He had asked them to go the Falkland Islands for cattle, and, carrying his appeal to the utmost, he says, "it is the first great duty of the Government to get food for the Irish people." He (Mr. Roebuck) wanted to know what Government would not have to do by and by—they would have to feed the Irish people, and to clothe them, ay, and to shave them. He must say, that however it might be a matter of jest, he had never beheld so lamentable a state exhibited by any people. It was lamentable to think that there should be so circumstanced a great nation, upon a soil of unexampled fertility; blessed with a climate quite as good as their own; possessing a population which, in physical qualities, they were told was stronger—which they were told in intellectual qualities was their equal, if not their superior; and he never for one instant denied it. He knew the Irish people were in everything, so far as the intellectual and physical powers were concerned, quite equal to the people of England. But there was one grand difference between them, and that was in the moral courage which enabled the English people to sustain themselves. They had not any desire, they had no wish, to ask another to feed them, or to help them; but in that honest manly pride which ought to distinguish a great nation, they possessed a power that would sustain them against all difficulties—that conquered all obstacles, and which asked for no assistance. Now, let the Irish people acquire that single quality of moral courage and self-reliance, and instead of seeing the abject spectacle they that night witnessed, they might hope to see them, with themselves, running the same great race in civilization. But if they now yielded to those demands—if they succumbed to the wishes of the noble Lord—England herself might be blotted out, and the great sun of civilization that was now shedding happiness, and light, and life upon her people, might set in the same wild wasting desolation that they now witnessed in Ireland.

VISCOUNT BERNARD regretted that any hon. Member should be willing, for one moment, to postpone the question of Irish relief. Did the hon. and learned Gentleman who had just sat down know anything of the state of Ireland? Was he aware of the real condition of the Irish peasant? Could he believe that famine was there in its most shocking and appalling form, and yet hesitate to afford succour; or would he allow the people to perish with hunger whilst he was satisfying himself of the propriety of certain doctrines of political economy? He had been entrusted with petitions from the part of Ireland which he represented, and in which, he could assure the House, there was the greatest distress; and he hoped the House would indulge him whilst he read from authentic documents some facts showing the frightful condition of some of the Irish poor. The noble Lord read a letter from a clergyman in his part of the county (Cork), who stated that every day the condition of the people was becoming more frightful and more deplorable, and that he shrunk from narrating the details of what he witnessed from morning to night. Each day added to the number of the destitute, and he added that what he witnessed made his heart ache. Another gentleman wrote to say that at Bantry the people were now eating the corn which had been intended for seed. The Dean of Cork said—

> "Our Cork committee have established fifty-four boilers. Famine is certainly progressing, the number of deaths increasing. The Government

established no boilers in this county; they were established by the Quakers, by the landlords, and (through the aid of the National Club and benevolent English friends) by our clergy."

Dr. Traill, in a letter to the Dean of Cork, stated—

> "In my opinion, no human efforts can keep us alive. Two days ago, three uncoffined bodies were brought in one cart, and thrown into a hole."

This letter was dated Jan. 28, 1847. And a letter from Crookhaven of the same date had the following—

> "Every day the relief committee meet, they have to fill up vacancies in the lists of those employed on the public roads; so insufficient is the rate of pay given to sustain life at the present exorbitant price of food."

But he begged to call the attention of Her Majesty's Government to the fact, that though Indian corn had fallen 9*s*., yet the price was rising, and the corn was being bought up, in the speculation of enhancing the price of seed. The point, however, which he was anxious to come to, was to trace the source of the present calamity, which he would contend was not from over-population. In the autumn of last year, a severe calamity fell on Ireland, though in its effects partial, because the Government at that time established depôts in every quarter where food was likely to become scarce. The great error of the present Administration was the breaking up those depôts of food. Her Majesty's Ministers stated also that they would not interfere with private enterprise, except in certain portions of Ireland, where private trade could not extend; but even in those districts, the Government had not done anything to prevent distress. The noble Lord then read an extract from a letter of Sir R. Routh to Mr. Trevelyan, dated Jan. 14, 1847—

> "In submitting to the Lords Commissioners of Her Majesty's Treasury a brief statement of the present duties, it is necessary to make some reference to those of the preceding season. On that occasion, it will be recollected, the chief depôt was at Cork.
>
> "In the present season it was thought fit to leave the east, north, and south coast, comprising the space between Londonderry and Skibbereen, to the exercise of private enterprise, for which the commisariat arrangements had prepared it; but the Government undertook the supply of the west coast, which is hardly yet accessible to trade in any degree sufficient for the supply.
>
> "With this object the following depôts have been established:—
>
> "County Cork—Castletown, Berehaven, Long Island, Skibbereen."

He would also read a letter from Sir R. Routh to himself, dated—

> "Oct. 10, 1846.—The Treasury Minute explains the grounds which have induced the Government to leave the south-eastern and southern ports, and those of the interior which are ordinarily supplied from them, to the foresight and enterprise of private merchants."

The noble Lord also read parts of other letters and instructions, to show that it had been intended some time ago by the Government to establish depôts at Castletown, Berehaven and Skibbereen. In some places where the Government had promised to establish depôts of food, their promises had not been carried into effect.

> "Instructions dated Nov. 16, 1846.
>
> "No application for the assistance of Government, in procuring supplies of food, are to be received in respect of any district, except the country west of the Shannon—the counties of Donegal, Leitrim, Kerry, Limerick, and that small portion of the county of Cork which is situate on the western coast of Ireland."
>
> "Mr. Trevelyan to Major Beamish.
>
> "August 28, 1846.—It has been already determined to establish a reserve depôt of Indian meal in that part of the country (Kilchrohane, Barony of W. D. W. Carberry); and I will write to Sir R. Routh, by to-day's post, to express to him my opinion that the measure should be carried into effect without loss of time."
>
> "Jan. 4.—This season we have under commissariat accounts the following depôts:—Castletown, Berehaven, Skibbereen."

He wished to call the attention of Government to the fact that the places where they had intended to establish depôts had been very much neglected. Here the noble Lord read the following extracts:—

> "From Mr. Bishop, Jan. 15.—The scarcity of food (in Skull) calls for early attention."
>
> "From Mr. Parker.—I am quite positive that unless something be done speedily, by throwing in supplies at a moderate price, by affording means of gratuitous relief, or by affording means of emigration for the most destitute, the bulk of the population will be swept off."
>
> "Treasury Minute, Jan. 15.—Their Lordships entirely approve of a floating depôt at Long Island, as recommended by Mr. Bishop."
>
> "Mr. Bishop, Jan. 10, 1847.—The harbour of Long Island appears to offer the best and safest position for a floating depôt."
>
> "Sir R. Routh, Jan. 19, 1847.—I wrote to-day to Sir H. Pigot, about the floating depôt at Long Island. Our stores have arrived at Castletown, Berehaven. If we had more depôts, we could not keep them supplied; and it has taken much time and labour to bring them to their present state of completion."

Another important point to which he wished to call the attention of Government was the conduct of the corn merchants in the district of Cork with which he was connected. He had by him various documents to prove that directly the Government decided on having depôts in Ireland, that instant prices rose in that country. He could assure the House that nothing could equal the misery which the combination of the corn merchants in the south of Ireland had brought about. With one exception, he believed that all the corn merchants of the city of Cork had combined to keep up prices. Being the only Irish representative connected with that part of the country, he must say that nothing could exceed the heartrending accounts he received from thence. He would read the following letter of Commissary General Hewetson to Mr. Trevelyan, dated Limerick, Dec. 30, showing the state of the market, and how the corn speculators were acting :—

> " Vessels with supplies are dropping into Cork and Limerick with every change of wind to the westward. To the former port chiefly for orders ; to the Shannon, direct consignments to the trade. Last quotations from Cork—Indian corn 17*l.* 5*s.* per towed ship ; Limerick corn not in the market ; Indian meal 18*l.* 10*s.* to 19*l.*, demand excessive. Looking to the quotations in the United States' markets, these are really famine prices, the corn (direct consignment from the States) not standing the consignee more than 9*l.* or 10*l.* per ton. The commander of the ship *Isabella*, lately, with a direct consignment from New York to a house in this city, makes no scruple, in his trips in the public steamers up and down the river, to speak of the enormous profits the English and Irish houses are making by their dealings with the States. One house in Cork alone, it is affirmed, will clear 40,000*l.* by corn speculations ; and the leading firm here will, I should say, go near to 80,000*l.*, as they are now weekly turning out from 700 to 900 tons of different sorts of meal. I know this cannot be controlled at present ; but I sincerely hope we shall, in the spring, have the means of interfering to check such, I would, say extortionate prices : but as they are according to the spirit of trade, and therefore legitimate, I will qualify the term to famine rates. I sometimes am inclined to think houses give large prices for cargoes exported for a market to keep them up ; it is an uncharitable thought, but really there is so much cupidity abroad, and the wretched people are suffering so intensely from the high prices of food, augmented by every party through whose hands it passes before it reaches them, that it is quite disheartening to look on."

He could only say from his experience, that he believed the statement contained in that letter to be a true statement. He could say, that in the town near which he resided they had constantly kept a store open with a view of underselling or keeping down the price. Every small huxter endeavoured to keep up the price, and the practice had gone to such an extent in places he knew, that corn having been sold under price for charity to certain parties, those parties endeavoured to resell it again. Yet those were the traders that Her Majesty's Government wished to deal so leniently with, although so high were the prices, that in the town he represented several traders themselves were almost ruined from the enormous price in the markets. It was a case in which it was the duty of the Government to interfere. They had never asked them to feed the whole popnlation, or to supply eight millions of people with bread ; but what they did ask them was this—let them do what the right hon. Baronet the Member for Tamworth had done last year—let them have a store which would enable them to keep a watch over the market, and then they would have secured, as he (Sir R. Peel) had secured, the affection and gratitude of the Irish people. In a letter to Mr. Trevelyan, Commissioner Hewetson said—

> " You still speak of the high prices of food, as if they were caused by the misconduct of merchants and dealers, and you allude to the high profits supposed to be obtained by persons of that class. The fact of these high profits may be doubled as a general rule. No doubt persons who, when prices were low, laid up a store against a time of scarcity, obtain and deserve to obtain the reward of their beneficial foresight."

With respect to the means that had been practised to procure a high price for corn, he had been looking for a precedent for it, and there was but one which was rather similar, though it had occurred at the distance of nearly two thousand years. He found the same course had been pursued of endeavouring to get ships (as had been done at Cork) to take corn from one place with the view of getting larger prices in another place. Looking to Boeck's *Economy of Athens*, he found it stated that no one did Athens and the other Grecian States so much injury as Cleomenes of Alexandria, Alexander's satrap in Egypt, who accumulated large stores of corn, fixed the prices arbitrarily, and, on account of the number of servants whom he had engaged in the corn trade, was enabled everywhere to ascertain the state of the markets with accuracy. He did not allow his corn vessels to load at any commercial town before his assistants in the place had given information with regard to the state of prices; if they were high the corn was landed and sold, and if not the vessel proceeded to some other place. The Government ought to have acted earlier. Before Parliament separated, the early potato crop had completely failed, and there was every reason to think that the other crop would fail likewise. While First Minister of the Crown, the right hon. Baronet had done him the honour to quote to the House a statement which he had forwarded from the board of guardians to which he belonged, first thanking the right hon. Baronet for the course he had pursued, and then urging on the Government, that such was the calamitous state of the country, energetic steps were necessary. He would refer for a few moments to the unfortunate Act of last Session, which had demoralized the whole of Ireland. In consequence of its operation, the small farmer was leaving his land neglected, and in many cases the farm labourers were working on the roads, the farmers themselves superintending as paid officers of the Board of Works. A Minister of the Crown in another place had brought a charge against the landlords of Ireland, as if they had been the cause of what had taken place. He utterly denied it. It ought to be remembered that the presentment sessions were held in most cases under intimidation, in a noisy turbulent court; and it was not the magistrates, but any person who pleased, that proposed the presentments. The noble Lord had stated that it was not of much consequence whether the roads that had been lately made in Ireland were productive or not; but, if that was the impression of the Government, why send orders to the Board of Works to proceed with the best projects that could be undertaken? In many cases he knew, that from the officers of the Board of Works not having been able to perform their duty, when the magistrates met in the presentment sessions, the proper documents were not ready to be laid before them. He had a letter from a clergyman in the west of Ireland, stating that the relief lists were even altered by the overseers and engineers of districts; and he had known cases in which the engineers had taken off parties at work on the roads, and put them on in other districts. The House had been told that the existing calamity ought not to be considered a national one, but ought to be met and dealt with by the residents in that country. Now, he (Lord Bernard) was not one of those who would ask anything unreasonable, but he thought that if ever there was a national calamity—if ever there was a calamity that came in the shape of a national judgment, this was the one. Was it nothing that 16,000,000*l.* worth of food had been destroyed and lost to the people? Would not that be considered a national calamity if it had happened in England? When the whole food of the population was withdrawn, ought the Irish Members to be taunted with coming forward to ask the sympathy of this country? One parallel case there was which had occurred not long ago. He would remind the House of what the right hon. Baronet (Sir R. Peel) had stated with respect to India, in bringing forward his budget of 1842. The right hon. Baronet had, at that time, to deal with the case of a large deficiency in the Indian revenue, and the right hon. Baronet said that he was quite aware that there must appear to be direct connexion between the finances of India and those of this country; but that was an imperfect and narrow view of the subject, for, if the credit of India became disordered, so that some great exertion were necessary to support it, then the credit of England must be brought forward, and any deficiency in the revenue of India would thus be felt extensively in this country. Let him remind the House of the manner in which they had dealt last year with a similar case. When an alteration was to be made in the corn laws, which it was imagined by a large party in this country would be injurious to their interests, an arrangement was effected by which three years were to be allowed before the measure came into operation; and the same course was followed when the duties on sugar were to be relaxed; and would they deal in a different manner when the injury was caused by the hand of man, and when it was a Divine infliction? The hon. and learned Gentleman had spoken of the absentees of Ireland. Now, no one could more regret than he (Lord Bernard) that absenteeism; but when the hon. Gentleman spoke of the large properties of the absentees, and of some cases in which the properties of absentees were well managed, he forgot that that was not the question, for it was equally possible to have them well managed, whether the landlords resided or not; but the evil of absenteeism was the great sums of money which it caused to be spent out of the country. The hon. and learned Gentleman had attacked the landlords of Ireland. He (Lord Bernard) believed that in the present year of unparalleled difficulties, they had, as far as his observation had gone, endeavoured to perform their duties. Their position ought to be remembered. This was the second year of calamity with them. To meet the calamity of last year, great subscriptions had been raised in Ireland. Nearly 20,000*l.* had been subscribed in the county of Cork in the early part of last year.

With regard to the measures of the Government for the future alleviation of the miseries of Ireland, in the first place came the temporary measure of the suspension of the navigation laws, the removal of the duties on corn, and the allowance of the use of sugar in breweries; and his only regret was that these measures had not been adopted at an earlier period. If they had been adopted in November, they might have done some little good. He questioned if now they would do any. It was possible that the suspension of the navigation laws might bring some foreign vessels to the south of Ireland, but beyond that he had not much hopes from these measures. Then the Government proposed a new poor law, and a measure for establishing relief committees. Now, he wished that the poor law should be assimilated in both countries. There never had been a greater calumny on the landlords, than that they had obstructed the passing of such a measure at an earlier period. It had been at the option of the Government to have done this some time ago. They ought to have done it at the time that the Commission of Inquiry represented that a large portion of the population were permanently living by mendicancy. He would urge on the present Government calmly to consider the question how far it was possible in the present position of Ireland to levy the rates under the existing Act. The fact was, that at present it was impossible to levy the rates for the support of the workhouses; 800,000*l.* was wanted for that purpose yearly, and he felt confident that if they persisted in exacting those rates, they would find in that course the greatest obstacle in the way of the new law. As a preliminary to whatever measures they might hereafter adopt, he hoped the Government would insist upon the people being sent back to their ordinary occupations, and to take part in their usual agricultural pursuits ; and if so he hoped it would be the omen of a happier and brighter day for Ireland. If they were to exert themselves to develop the resources of that country—if they would, by means of railroads, open the distant ports of Ireland to the action of trade—he had no doubt they would be amply repaid. The sum spent on the improvement of Ireland last year was 375,000*l.*, and the revenue of the country had increased more than 200,000*l.* a year. Sir Robert Kane had stated, with regard to the counties of Cork and Galway, that the money laid out in developing the resources of these counties, would be repaid cent per cent. He would ask the House then to teach Ireland the great moral lesson of availing herself of the great resources which Providence had placed around her—acknowledging, at the same time, that whatever measures they might take, and however statesmen might attempt to alleviate her condition — however they might improve her agriculture and furnish seed for her neglected soil—still they must live in the daily and hourly dependence on an all-wise and all-bountiful Providence.

SIR R. H. INGLIS said, his unfeigned respect for the noble Lord who had just addressed the House compelled him to express the regret with which he had heard him lend the sanction of his character to the renewal of doctrines which he had thought were everywhere exploded. The noble Lord spoke of the wicked combination by which certain corn dealers in the city of Cork had raised the price of corn. Now, Cork was a city containing above 100,000 inhabitants, and not far from it there was the city of Waterford, large and populous; and even if it were not, there was the city of Dublin on the same side, and the city of Bristol on the other side, of the Channel. Now, could any man believe that if all the corn dealers in these towns were to agree not to sell a bushel of wheat until corn had reached a famine price, there would not be one who, to use the vulgar expression, would split, and so defeat the whole object of the combination? He had risen immediately after the hon. and learned Member for Bath, because that hon. and learned Member, whom he did not now see in his place, told the House that he spoke as an English Member—thereby, at least, recognizing the justice of this question being considered as an imperial question, and not to fall exclusively upon those who were locally interested. Sharing with that hon. and learned Gentleman the privilege of being an English Member, he (Sir R. Inglis) availed himself of the first opportunity to express the regret which he felt in listening to a large portion of that hon. and learned Member's speech. He thought that the three Bills which were before the House would have supplied abundance of food for discussion to the most voracious appetite. The hon. and learned Member, however, with exhaustless ingenuity, had contrived to bring into this discussion every *vexata questio* which had ever tormented the minds of hon. Members. For the special ease and benefit of one hon. Member, not then in his place (Mr. Ward), he proposed to revive the Appropriation Clause; and for the accommodation of other hon. Members he suggested various other additions to the policy of his noble Friend at the head of the Government. The gallant Member for Wycombe, to his surprise, had objected to this policy as a bit-by-bit policy; but if ever there were a Government which had brought forward larger and more comprehensive measures for the "regeneration," as it was called, though he did not like the word, of a great nation, than those brought forward by the noble Lord, then he had read history very imperfectly. Those measures might be right or they might be wrong, but at least they were as comprehensive as ever had been devised by any statesman for any emergency, however critical. His immediate object in rising after the hon. and learned Member for Bath, was to bring the House back to the real question before them, the miserable condition of the great bulk of their fellow-subjects in Ireland. At that moment the eyes of the empire were concentred upon the proceedings of the House, he would venture to hope and believe, with a deep sympathy for the sufferings in Ireland; and when the hon. and learned Member for Bath talked of expressing the indignation of the people of England, for that was the phrase the hon. Member used against the measures of Her Majesty's Government, he, for one, trusted that that expression would be repudiated by the great body of the people of England; and that their feeling was that of an intense desire to promote the present benefit of the people of Ireland. He limited himself to the present benefit; because, with respect either to the causes of the present distress, or to the remedies which might be devised against its recurrence, he held that their first duty was to consider in what way the evils at present existing might be relieved. He quite concurred in much that had been said with respect to the misconduct and consequent misfortunes of that great class, the Irish landlords; for he understood that in real life there might still, as formerly, be found cases analogous, similar, to those characters so inimitably described in the *Castle Rackrent* of our great living novelist. But that was not the question now before them. The question was whether the actual situation of the people of Ireland was not such as to justify or require those whom God had spared from that great calamity, readily and cheerfully to extend to them their sympathy and support. How had that calamity been borne by the great body of the people? He was not going to retract one word of the praise which he had applied on a former evening to those who were suffering from the same calamity in Scotland; but at present they were dealing with Ireland exclusively, and therefore he would for a short time call the attention of the House to that subject; and the facts to which he was about to advert were to be found principally in certain reports which had been made by the almoners of the benevolence of a particular religious body—he meant the Society of Friends—who had deputed certain members of their body to visit Ireland, with the warmest and, at the same time, with the most intelligent desires to promote their interests. The statements which were given by these reports of the actual distress, were such as one could hardly trust himself to read aloud; but he would read one or two passages to show how well the suffering people had earned the sympathy of the House and the country. The deputies had first visited the counties of Westmeath, of Leitrim, and of Roscommon. One passage stated—

> "To do the people justice, they are bearing their privations with a remarkable degree of patience and fortitude, and very little clamorous begging is to be met with upon the roads; at least, not more than has been the case in Ireland for many years. In fact, from all we heard and saw, we are satisfied that these poor creatures are thus, notwithstanding their deep poverty, keeping each other alive."

This was the general statement, but he could give more specific instances. The visitors spoke of a hovel barely four feet high to the top of the walls, and hardly nine feet square:—

> "In another hardly equal in size to this, was also a widow and large family. They literally had no means of support. . . . . In addition to the poor family who owned the house, I saw in the corner, crouched upon her knees over the little turf fire, a very old and superannuated woman, constantly rocking to and fro, and muttering to herself. Her matted gray hair hung raggedly over her dirty shrivelled face, adding to her wild and wretched appearance. She was hardly clothed at all, so miserable were the tatters with which she was partially covered. Immediately behind her on the damp mud floor, a small pallet of straw was spread; this was her resting place at night, and here she sat all day. It appeared that this sad object was no relative of the poor widow of the house; but, with noble kindness, she allowed her to remain here, and shared with her the last morsel. Surely it might be said of her, as of the widow of old—'she gave more than they all!'"

He need scarcely inform the House, that in a large portion of the north-west, the west, and the south of Ireland, the people were living on one meal a day of cabbage, or, in some cases, of sea-weed; and yet the visitor declared, in reference to another district as well as to the first—

> "I cannot leave this branch of the subject without stating, that the patience and good feeling of these unfortunate men is wholly beyond praise. Where their families are small, so that they have been passed over to give tickets to others with larger, or where a whole district has been left without tickets, because the road selected to be first made is designed to run through a country suffering under greater privations than theirs, they have listened cheerfully, and even thankfully, to the explanation given to them, merely begging that they might not be forgotten, for that they were indeed sorely put to it to live. Never have I witnessed so much good feeling, patience, and cheerfulness under privation. Out of the scores of families which we visited, and with whom we conversed, in Donegal, I hardly remember an instance of their murmuring or begging, although they were at the time suffering from hunger and disease."

These were the statements made by comparative strangers, on a mission prompted by their own good feelings. He should exhaust the patience of the House if he gave any more anecdotes of the extreme sufferings of the people, or of the way in which they were borne; but he was tempted by the allusion which had been made, to enter slightly into the great question of the character of the Protestant clergy and their exertions during the present crisis, as showing the value of a resident body of country gentlemen—taking it upon the lowest ground—such as were the Protestant clergy. They say of Stranorlar—

> "We afterwards called on the clergyman, who appeared much devoted to the suffering poor. He frankly told Mr. Forster, that although there was much distress in this district, he believed that we should find other districts so much worse, that he felt it hardly right to receive anything from him."

Of Dunfanoghy—

> "The rector of the parish takes a deep interest in the condition of the poor, and he and his family are devoting much time and attention to their wants, soup-kitchens, &c. Through the energy of this excellent man, a soup-kitchen on a small scale was established two days after our visit, and a sum of money raised for its future support."

And of Fannad they say—

> "Mr. G. found the district of Fannad in a dreadful state. The clergyman (almost the only resident above the small farmer) is, with his family, devoting the whole of his time and care to alleviate the distress."

And they say, when speaking of Ballinha—

> "We also drove over to Ballinha, a village about six miles distant, where we found the Protestant clergyman of the parish giving up the whole of his time to the support and assistance of his suffering neighbours."

He was bound, however, to own, that though the good character given of certain great absentee landlords was perfectly just, yet that this did not apply to great bodies of the absentees. In 1822, when a subscription was raised for one of the western counties of Ireland by the resident gentry, landowners, and clergy—he was quoting from his late lamented friend, Bishop Jebb—the absentee landowners were receiving 83,000*l.* annually. And what amount did they contribute? Their congregated subscriptions amounted to 83*l.*, not one farthing in the pound of their incomes raised from the very county; and he knew from those who discharged the disagreeable duty of applying to unwilling rich men, that an absentee landlord who was taking 6,000*l.* a year from one district in the west, or rather in the centre of Ireland, had not given sixpence towards the relief of his suffering fellow-countrymen. ["Name."] He would not scruple to mention the name to any Gentleman out of the House; but although the House as a body was entitled to express its opinion of particular classes, the particular mention of the private conduct of individuals by name was an evil which he would not practise. For his own part, he felt, and he had long felt, more difficulty in introducing a poor law into Ireland as a great remedial measure, seeing how imperfectly the existing law had worked. In his opening speech, the noble Lord, speaking of Castlebar, said, that in the workhouse, holding 600, there were only 150 inmates, because the guardians were not willing or able to levy a rate, though hundreds would have pressed into it. An hon. Member behind says, that this is the solitary case. He (Sir R. H. Inglis) was sorry to say that, even in the papers from which he quoted, he could find others.

> "In Athlone, a large building capable of containing 700. Here a miserable state of things presented itself, the union being very much in debt, and their credit exhausted, and the poor inmates have scarcely clothes to cover them, and little if any bedding at night. The guardians, however, are so much in debt—owing above 2,000*l.*—that they have given notice that, unless the rate be paid, they will be compelled to close the building, and turn these poor wretches out.
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> "Carrick-on-Shannon.—The deaths are at the rate of about twelve each week; while the guardians are so poor, and the union so much in debt, that they obtain their daily food on credit. The workhouse is unprovided with bedding, insomuch that, in the hospital, two or three poor creatures are lying in one bed, and many of them have no-

thing but straw; while in the poorhouse at large, there is nothing but straw for any of the inmates.

"Castlerea.—At the Castlerea poorhouse, a shocking state of things presented itself, the poor inmates lying upon straw, and their dormitories being in such a state of dirt that Mr. Forster was unable to venture into them. In this poorhouse, there are at present 1,080 paupers; but the last 434 were admitted in so hurried a manner, that there is neither bedding nor clothes for them. The measles being in the house, and a few cases of fever already, it is probable that, if something be not speedily effected to remedy the evil, there will be a fearful mortality among the inmates. Yet even to be admitted is better than to be excluded. Two cases of death, if not from starvation, at least from the absence of nourishment during an illness brought on by want of proper food, occurred in Castlerea the week before we visited the town; the individuals having applied for admission into the poorhouse; but the consideration of their cases being postponed, death stepped in."

And here he would call attention to the fact, that if, in the present mitigated form of the poor law in Ireland, there was such trouble in raising the rates, what would be the difficulty in raising them for the larger purposes contemplated by the present measure? A far more stringent system must be introduced, in order to make property maintain poverty. He was, indeed, quite aware of the alteration that would be made in the social system of Ireland, as it was depicted by his noble Friend when he introduced these measures; they would tend to something like a social revolution — they would change the character of the whole of the poor and of the rich, and would produce a greater change in the occupation and tenure of land than any measure in that country for the last three hundred years. There was great reason to believe that 100*l.* Irish rental in 1800, had become at least 250*l.* in 1846; this increase, though connected in the first instance, and in appearance with that subdivision of property which gave political power, was the natural and necessary consequence of the competition for land among an increasing number of tenants; but whether it were from a desire of power, or from a desire of wealth, the landlord had had not only an increased tenantry but an increased rent roll on an artificial value. He had not paid upon it as in this country he must have paid; and he must now be prepared to make the sacrifice. He had always said that there was no more right to tax the lands of those who held property for not residing upon it in Kerry, than they had to tax a person who had property in Cornwall for not residing upon it. But virtually the effect of the poor law would be to impose such a tax upon the absentees of Ireland, as would have the effect of bringing them back to that country, at the same time that it would tend essentially to the well-being of the poor. As he understood, it was the object of the House to discuss, without much technical reference to the words of any of the Bills, the social condition of Ireland; and as, on the part of England, there was a disposition to make almost any sacrifice for the relief of this temporary distress, he had not confined himself to the specific provisions of the Bill on the Table. He believed in fact, that few hon. Members knew exactly which Bill was actually in progress; but approving of the objects of all the Bills, he should give his cordial support to the second reading of this Bill.

Colonel CONOLLY begged to thank the noble Lord for the liberal and enlightened policy which he had adopted towards Ireland, and to tender his individual acknowledgments, which were in accordance with the general feeling in Ireland, for the generous sympathy manifested by the English people towards his suffering fellow-countrymen. Very few objections occurred to the measures proposed by the noble Lord; but there were one or two points in which the measures fell rather short of the requirements of the country in its present unhappy state. With regard to the system of relief proposed, every one would rejoice at measures calculated to supply immediate relief from starvation; but he should be obliged to object, in Committee, to certain facilities for employment afforded by the Bill, which would operate as an encouragement to habits of indolence and dependence. But another and an objection of a much greater magnitude, was to a project which he was very sorry to find advocated by a number of hon. Members in that House, and amongst others by the hon. Member for Stroud (Mr. Poulett Scrope). These hon. Gentlemen had taken it into their minds that there was to be no rest or relief for Ireland except in the opening of the poor-law system to the utmost extent in that country. Considering the difficulty which already existed in collecting the rates, and the clamour which was raised in many districts against the system generally, he was sure that an extension of the law would be most unpopular. He must warn hon. Members, that if they overcharged the rates which were now collected, they would not only retard relief, but they would destroy the means of giving that relief which was afforded. Except in Castlebar, the workhouses had been made to accommodate the greatest possible number, and the present system had produced great benefits; but the admission of the able-bodied poor into the workhouse would be fraught with great mischief, and add to the clamour which had already been raised. The danger of exciting the public mind on this subject was very great, and he feared the consequence even of announcing such an intention. It was only with very considerable difficulty that the present rates were collected. He was bound to say that the poor law had worked marvellously well, especially in the district near Dublin with which he was acquainted. It was true that the work upon the railways had greatly relieved the workhouses in the neighbourhood of Dublin; but even in remote parts, where the difficulties were aggravated, and it could not be expected to work so well, considerable benefit had been produced. He had taken great pains to ascertain the opinions of those with whom he was acquainted in Ireland; and he could say that they looked with unqualified apprehension and alarm at the proposal to extend the rates beyond what they were at present. He was convinced that it would be offering a premium to improvidence if they were indiscriminately to relieve the universal population of the country. He had no intention of offering any direct opposition to the measures now proposed; but he thought it his duty to point out his objections as to certain points, and to say that he should feel bound to resist the indiscriminate admission of able-bodied paupers into the workhouse. That was a system which would entirely destroy the relief which at present was given; but it had been said that that evil might be mitigated by giving out-door relief in food instead of money. The objection was, that many parishes would have to send their paupers ten miles to the workhouse for their food at a very great expense. The reason that, at Castlebar, the fresh rate was not put on was, that 2,100*l.* of the old rate was still outstanding. The next objection he would point out was to the mode proposed of taking up uncultivated estates and cultivating them. That measure could not be made to repay the landlords, and it would also be found not to repay the Government. It was not wise, therefore, in his opinion, to undertake such a speculation. Mr. Griffiths had stated that 6,000,000 of acres were susceptible of cultivation in 1835; but that was going very high into the uncultivated districts, and cultivation had advanced rapidly since that time. He, therefore, warned any one from undertaking such an experiment after all the best land had been cultivated, and only the worst remained. There was a third point, which was this: he begged the noble Lord, who had so liberally offered 50,000*l.*, in order to provide seed, not to limit the offer to that amount; but, as the landlords only asked it as a loan, he hoped it would be increased, if that should be found necessary. Some of these plans of improvement by cultivation seemed to have for their object the extermination of the potato in Ireland; but he hoped that no such object would be persisted in. The potato was most valuable as food, and even in its worst state was a source of great profit to the peasant. The cultivation of it was superior to any newfangled notions of cultivation of the soil, and he hoped it would not be superseded. The other measures of the noble Lord were various, many of them legal and technical, with which he, as a country gentleman, could not pretend to deal. One was for facilitating the conveyance of estates, incumbered to their full value; and he might mention that he knew of two estates, in which the greatest advantage had resulted from a change of owners. It was hardly possible to imagine a more sudden improvement. It reflected the greatest credit upon Lord Clonmel, who had purchased Bishopscourt, and Mr. Barton, who had brought Straffan, the two estates to which he had alluded. This showed the advantage of getting rid of all impediments on the transfer of such property. Extraordinary advantages had also arisen from the subdivision and sale of the Blessington estates. He was not aware that he had any farther suggestions to make; and, in conclusion, he would again thank the Government for the spirit in which their measures had been conceived, and the tone and temper with which they had been announced.

Mr. HUME said, the hon. Gentleman had made an observation which induced him to rise for a few moments to claim the attention of the House. The hon. Gentleman said he hoped the able-bodied men were not to become a burden to the land of Ireland. He would wish to ask the hon. Member, did he desire that the able-bodied poor of Ireland should become a burden to the people of England? This was a point on which there appeared to be the greatest indifference prevailing among some hon. Gentlemen who represented Irish constituencies, though he should admit there were other hon. Members from Ireland who expressed themselves very differently, and who admitted that Ireland ought to support her own poor, and be able, at the same time, to raise and sustain herself in the scale of nations. It appeared to him to be lamentable, in the highest degree, to hear the manner in which some hon. Gentlemen expressed their gratitude to Her Majesty's Ministers. And for what? Merely because they were ready to give money to the Irish proprietors. When such was the feeling which prevailed on the part of an hon. Member (Colonel Conolly) so distinguished and so well known as the hon. Gentleman, it was, he thought, time for Her Majesty's Government to consider whether they were not in a wrong course, and whether the course which they were taking would not have the effect, not of raising Ireland, but of sinking England and Scotland. These countries must be dragged down with the load of Ireland, if they were to be burdened not merely with the poor of Ireland, but if they were required also to furnish the Irish landlords with money for the improvement of their properties. He could see no plan, no comprehensive view, of a master mind, in the propositions brought forward by Her Majesty's Government. He saw no appearance of a general view of Ireland and of this country having been taken, and resulting in a set of comprehensive measures to be brought forward. No one could object to measures for the temporary relief of the country; but what he complained of was no sound attempt at radical improvement—at effecting a radical change in the state of Ireland, which would have the effect of putting an end to the repetition of such evils as those now existing, next year or the year after. Before they granted a single shilling of money for the purposes proposed by Her Majesty's Government, he thought they ought to have some estimate of the probable cost laid before them. They appeared to him to be going on as if there was nothing to be done but to advance money, money, money. He could tell the House, however, that the Treasury would be soon emptied, and yet they were going on without any knowledge of the amount that would be required from them. The noble Lord said it would probably be 8,000,000*l.* or 9,000,000*l.* Some said it would be twice that sum, and for his part he believed it would be at least three times as much. If their duty were to take care of the finances of the country, they had a right to inquire where all this money was to come from. The best time to meet the evil was at its commencement. If this sum were allowed to be spent, and anything occurred, either from distress or a failure of trade, which was not unlikely, and there was a diminution of wages in conjunction with a high price of provisions, what a condition would this country be in! Would that be a time to provide 9,000,000*l.* or 10,000,000*l.* by loan? To attempt it would knock down the funds to a degree that would shake the credit of the country. The opportunity, therefore, which now presented itself of at once meeting and mastering the evils of Ireland, ought to be immediately taken. No man in that House ought to shut his eyes to the degraded and deplorable state of that country. Look at the condition of the population, the tenure of land, the situation of the proprietors. No other country in the world was in such a state, all owing to the legislation and the treatment of England; and the results which had followed were a punishment upon us for that treatment. What, then, were the measures which every thinking man would adopt? Equal laws and equal justice. Unequal laws, unjust oppression, and continued strife between the country gentlemen of Ireland, had been the bane of that country; and he recollected twenty-four years ago calling upon hon. Gentlemen from Ireland, on the 4th of July, not to indulge in dissension. Every holiday, one half the country was arrayed against the other, with banners unfurled, and arms in their hands, so that it required the greatest exertions on the part of the Government to prevent civil war. On those occasions he always stated in that House it was the duty of Government to remedy the grievances of Ireland. The grievances were, that seven-eighths of the people were kept in a state of degradation and oppression by one-eighth, and were burdened with tithes. When he urged the abolition of tithes, the country gentlemen of Ireland said, "We, the gentlemen of Ireland, hold seven-eighths of the land, and is it to be supposed we do not feel for her miseries?" He then stated Ireland would never be at peace, nor would she rise in the scale of nations until the injustice and inequality which had arisen from our penal laws were removed; that the dominant Church must be removed (with which he was sorry to see Her Majesty's Ministers did not intend to interfere) before the people would be satisfied; and along with that must be extended to them the same civil rights which Englishmen enjoyed. That being done, he would tax Irishmen equally with Englishmen. He, therefore, submitted to Her Majesty's Ministers, that as radical evils existed in Ireland, they should bring forward a plan by which adequate relief would be given, whilst those evils would be corrected; whilst they were affording palliatives to immediate distress, let measures be adopted which would give Ireland a chance of regeneration. In his speech of Monday, the noble Lord read a passage from Fletcher of Saltoun, showing the state of Scotland in the seventeenth century, and he referred to what the landlords in that country had since done by uniting themselves, and relying upon their own energies. The landlords of Ireland within the last two months had banded together, but it was only to come to that House to obtain as much money as they could from England. ["No, no!"] Their resolutions said so. He had read their resolutions with attention, and if hon. Gentlemen shut their eyes to the ordinary and fair meaning of them, he could not help it; but looking at their general tenor that was their object. That being the case, it behoved Her Majesty's Ministers to consider whether, even if they interposed this intended large expenditure for the regeneration of Ireland, they were satisfied that next year the state of things would be any better. If the country were then in a worse condition, and we were again to aid her with ten or twenty millions, where was it to come from? Such a course would be bringing the whole kingdom to beggary; it would be reducing England to the condition of Ireland, instead of raising Ireland to the condition of England. If the noble Lord at the head of the Government quoted such authors as Fletcher of Saltoun, as to what had been the case in Scotland, why should he hesitate to adopt measures for producing the same results in Ireland? It appeared to him, therefore, that that House ought not to vote a single shilling until they were informed what means were to be adopted to remove the radical evils which afflicted Ireland. With reference to England, judging from the reports from Nottingham, and different parts of the country, there appeared to be an extent of pauperism and distress greater than had existed for a long time; but why was it that the people were not so altogether desperate as they were in Ireland? Because there was some degree of employment, and with employment there were wages. The want of employment had been one of the means of reducing Ireland to her present condition; want of employment had been produced by want of confidence; and want of confidence had arisen from bad laws, from perpetual contests between Protestant and Catholic, from constant social differences; so that no one who had money would venture to risk it in a country where there appeared no certainty of the laws being executed. Country gentlemen and proprietors in Ireland might depend upon it that the longer they postponed the application of radical remedies, the longer they applied mere palliatives, and forbore from going to the root of the evil, the heavier would be the calamity when it came. Neither would the people of this country patiently bear to continually advance their money whilst Ireland was retained in her present degraded condition. He did not, however, blame Ireland herself, so much as the Governments which had allowed these evils to exist; and he again pressed upon the Administration, as he had upon every Administration, to give Ireland a chance of regeneration, by making the Union effective, by removing that mock government, the Lord Lieutenancy, which had caused all the evils of a delegated authority, and by giving her equal laws with our own. Hon. Gentlemen, however, had seemed determined all along to shut their eyes to these evils, and not to look at them until something extraordinary happened to stop them in their progress. The present crisis was sufficient to stop them, and an opportunity had now arisen when they might with satisfaction say, "We have long abused Ireland; we have refused her civil rights; we have oppressed her; let us now act with justice, and extend to her help by every means in our power; let us assist her with our capital when it can be applied upon sound principles." Do not, however, let them advance their money in order to attempt to bring wild lands into cultivation—the wildest speculation ever heard of, for all such attempts had proved lamentable failures. If expense was to be incurred, let it be upon the principle that benefit should be derived from it, and not evil. The present plan, however, seemed to be a hodge-podge in which he did not see one single means of regenerating the country.

The CHANCELLOR OF THE EXCHEQUER: Sir, I have listened with great attention to the speech which has just fallen from the hon. Member; but I must say, that with the exception of some points which have been already included in the plan which my noble Friend (Lord J. Russell) has laid before the House, I did not collect from that speech any suggestion that would tend to attain that which my hon. Friend (Mr. Hume) proposed as the great object to be sought by Parliament, namely, giving employment to the people of Ireland. He alluded to the party and religious quarrels which have for years distracted that unhappy country—he alluded to "a dominant Church"—he alluded to the removal of the Lord Lieutenant; but, excepting the proposal that capital should be advanced under proper securities to the people of Ireland, I did not collect from his speech any one suggestion which would tend towards the object in view. I have listened not only to his speech, but to those which have fallen from other hon. Members, especially from Irish Members, with the greatest attention; because, feeling as I do the immense importance of the present occasion, the awful calamity which has visited Ireland—I might say the appalling nature of the circumstances in which we are placed as regards that country—I have had the utmost anxiety to hear any suggestion, or any opinion, from those gentlemen who are practically acquainted with the state of Ireland, which might enable us to steer our course with greater confidence. I have been gratified by the absence of all party or personal feelings in the observations which have fallen from hon. Members: this is a question far beyond any party or any personal feeling. I am sure that Her Majesty's Government are not only actuated by the most sincere desire to do that which is best for Ireland under circumstances almost unparalleled in modern history; but, though I believe in my conscience, that we have taken the only course which was open to us, yet, God knows, the circumstances are such that it is impossible for any man to feel very confident on the subject. Although some Gentlemen have alluded to the transactions of last autumn, I will refer only very shortly to the measures which passed in the last Session, and the course which the Government has pursued in the execution of those measures, excepting so far as it may be desirable to refer to the past, and to the experience which we have thus acquired, as furnishing the best lessons for our guidance in the future. The hon. Member for Wycombe (Mr. Osborne), who commenced this debate, criticised rather severely the Act passed at the close of last Session for the employment of the poor in Ireland. Now, the House must remember that at an earlier period of the Session, an Act very similar in its provisions was passed without opposition in this House, or with the opposition of only one hon. Member, I believe—an Act for the employment of the destitute poor during the spring and summer months; and that was carried out by the Irish proprietors to a very considerable extent. That Act proceeded upon what was called the half-grant system, a repayment of only half the amount expended being required from the proprietors; and no single word of objection to that Act, so far as I know, fell from any of the Irish Gentlemen during the Session. They endeavoured to avail themselves of its provisions to an extent far beyond what the necessity of the country required. On the 1st of September there had been actually expended under that Act only the sum of 290,000*l.* That sum expended in wages, it is notorious, deranged the labour market of Ireland last year; it affected the supply of labour to this country and Scotland, and, what is more, the harvest in Ireland in many parts stood uncut for want of labourers; and on the petition and request of the farmers in Ireland the works were stopped, in order to enable them to get labourers for reaping their corn. But now, to what extent were presentments made by Irish gentlemen up to that time under the Act? Why, to the extent of no less than 1,300,000*l.* To say, therefore, that this was a measure which was unpopular in Ireland, or to which the Irish gentlemen were opposed, is most contrary to the fact. But the hon. Gentleman talked of the extraordinary difference between that and the measure proposed by the present Government towards the close of the last Session, and stigmatized this last as an ill-considered measure, passed with indecent haste, and for the first time charging the real property of the country for the support of the poor. Why, the difference between the former measure and this was hardly worthy of notice. Our measure required the repayment of the whole advance, because, believing that the great inducement to over-presentment in the former Bill had been the half-grant plan, we were anxious to impose some check upon that extravagance;

but when the hon. Gentleman talks of our having for the first time charged the real property of Ireland with the maintenance of the poor, he forgets the one change which we did make in the mode in which the repayments were to be charged, namely, that they were to be charged according to the poor rates, and not according to the county cess. The county cess falls upon real property; but the poor rate falls also in some cases upon other than real property; and so far from the accusation against us being true, we extended the description of property upon which the charge was to fall, and thereby brought in a larger number of contributors to the fund. Those works were to be carried on, as were all those under the preceding Act, for the purpose of relieving the poor: it was not for the sake of the works, though collateral advantage might no doubt be derived from the execution of useful works; but the object, the avowed object, was to put into the hands of the people of Ireland the means of purchasing that food which heretofore they had raised for themselves, but which, through the failure of the potato crop, they had no longer the means of providing for themselves, and were, therefore, under the necessity of buying. But if relief to the poor had been given not in work, but in the ordinary mode, it must have come from the parties contributing to the poor rate; from these parties is to come (for it has not yet come) the repayment of the money which was advanced for paying the labourers on the works; and therefore from the self-same source as would under any circumstances have maintained the poor, and not from the real property only of Ireland, are the funds to be drawn which are expended under this Act. My noble Friend (Lord J. Russell) is accused, indeed, of having said that it was immaterial whether the works were useless or not; but what my noble Friend said was, that, so far as the relief of the poor went, it was immaterial whether the works were useless or not, because money was equally put into their hands for the purpose of purchasing food; the labour was given as some test of destitution, and as being supposed in the then circumstances to be a better means of affording relief than the gratuitous distribution of food or money. But he never said, nor could be supposed, to say, that it was immaterial to the country whether the works were such as were useful or not. They were, no doubt, of the same description as the works prescribed in the former Act of Parliament; but the object being relief of the poor, money was put into their hands, whether the work would be productive or not. The hon. Gentleman went on to say, that if the works had been of a useful description, the gentry of Ireland would gladly have contributed the whole of the funds, and no part whatever would have fallen upon the public. I am not sanguine enough to think that that would have been the case; and for this reason, that an Act was passed last Session, authorizing a grant of 50,000*l.* in aid of useful works in Ireland, the condition of the grant being that an equal sum, half the expense of the works, should be contributed, either by private subscription or by presentment in Ireland; and not one single application was made for the grant of one penny of that 50,000*l.*; or at least, as my right hon. Friend (Mr. Labouchere) suggests, any applications that were made were not persisted in when it was found that such contributions were required. Therefore, with all respect for the hon. Member, he must give me leave to doubt whether, if the works had been useful, it is quite so certain that no call would have been made upon the State. He has said, and so has the noble Lord opposite (Lord Bernard), that it is not in any respect the fault of the proprietors or the residents in Ireland, that these public works have been carried to such an amount, as I am sorry to say they have; but give me leave to say, I cannot altogether acquit the resident proprietors of Ireland in this matter. That many of them have done their duty in the most exemplary manner—that many of them, most of them, have been willing to aid with exemplary generosity and self-sacrifice in supporting persons upon their own estates, and giving employment upon their own estates and from their means, I am ready to bear my glad testimony; and among those who have done most, I am inclined to believe that those who have been stigmatized by one or two Gentlemen to-night, the absentee landlords, are foremost. It is only this day that I have received an account of a gentleman, whom I may mention by name, as he is no longer a Member of this House—I mean Colonel Wyndham—who I believe furnishes a daily ration to 10,000 people. But that wherein I think there has been a considerable neglect of duty—and I am not speaking merely of the landlords of Ireland, because I believe the higher description of occupiers are still more in fault, and are those who have neglected their duty most grossly, and whom it is most difficult to compel to do their duty—that in which I think they have neglected it, is in not endeavouring to prevent and check the abuses which in truth they themselves have perpetrated in these public works. I do not wish to say anything which can give offence to any individual; I will therefore only take the liberty of reading a very short paragraph from one of the reports of the Commissioners of Public Works. It must be remembered that the system upon which the public works are carried on is this — that presentment sessions are held, who are to form some estimate of the amount of destitution in their baronies, to vote the sums which may be required for relief from time to time, and to determine the works upon which labour can most advantageously be employed; and that relief committees are formed in different districts, whose business it is to ascertain who are the parties most destitute and unable to find other employment, and to draw up lists of such persons, in order to entitle them to be employed on the public works. Now, what says the Report of the Board of Works? They draw the distinction between what was held in theory, and what was done in practice:—

> "In theory the sessions should present for works for the relief of probable distress; the relief committees should ascertain and investigate the distress from week to week; and the Government should execute the works provided by the sessions, and pay the labourers supplied by the committees. In practice, the sessions frequently present without any previous local investigation; the relief committees exercise little or no discrimination; so that the duties of both devolve upon us (the Board of Works), in addition to our own; or rather we have to execute our own, incumbered by the neglect of those of our concurrent functionaries. We have to ascertain for ourselves the probable amount of destitution, thus incurring the odium of rejecting works which the sessions have approved of (with apparent liberality, but frequently under external pressure, and real neglect of their duty), and of selecting from lists every name on which is returned to us as destitute, each body is ready to excuse itself with the people by throwing its duty on our shoulders, and then they appear clamorous to the Government, and complain of the results of the non-performance of their own duties."

Now it may have been difficult—no doubt it was—for the resident gentlemen to perform this duty; but upon whom was it thrown by their neglect? Upon an officer of engineers. Now, if local knowledge is required to ascertain who are destitute—if local knowledge is necessary to strike off those who attempt imposition, and they are many—I ask any Irish Gentleman, whether he thinks such duties could best be performed by an officer of engineers, a stranger to the country, whose province it was to superintend the execution of public works, or by the resident gentry and proprietors of the country? And I ask any Irish Gentleman, even my noble Friend behind me, whether I can acquit them of neglect of duty, when, instead of performing these duties, they threw them upon the officers of public works? I fully admit the difficulties which had to be dealt with; I admit the absence of that local machinery in Ireland which we possess in every parish and township of this country; but when it is said that the fault does not rest with the resident gentry, but entirely with the Board of Works and their officers, I do say that an attempt was made to throw upon that board and its officers a task which they were utterly incapable of performing. But, nevertheless, I think the effect produced by the Act to which I refer has been understated. It is true that a large number of people have been employed for the purpose of performing duties which are discharged in this country by the gentry, and farmers, and occupiers in every parish and township; but when we consider that 500,000, or more, of people were to be paid their wages, that their work was to be superintended, and that the number of persons placed upon the works was to be checked; and when we find that in one single week, in the county of Clare, by the exertions of one officer, 3,000 persons who had been improperly put upon the works by the relief committee, were struck off, and that the same number were struck off under similar circumstances in the following week; I ask, when these duties were performed in addition to the proper functions of such officer, whether it is quite fair to attempt to cast reproach upon these officers for not discharging their duties? But the effect of these measures has, no doubt, been, to a very considerable degree, to alleviate and prevent distress. In the report of the Board of Works, dated early in January, summing up the result of their labours, they say—

> "In such periods of paralysing distress we would assiduously avoid imputing blame; but as faithful chroniclers of the progress of our labours, we must say that were there more self-reliance exercised, more employment given by private individuals capable of doing so, at an early period, our very heavy and responsible task would have been more easily accomplished, and fatalities,

unjustly charged against us, would have been avoided. Yet with all the admitted defects of the Labour-rate Act, and in whatever light the Act may now or hereafter be viewed, it has, in the sudden outbreak of a wide-spread calamity, wholly unparalleled in Europe, in this or any other age, furnished temporary relief to a very large number, and to that extent has gained time during the few months it has been in operation. The attention of the most able men in Europe, as well as here, has been fixed upon the subject, and some suitable measures may now be devised to meet the extent and nature of the evil, both of which are now more clearly ascertained. The famine is increasing; deaths become more frequent, and the prospect may well appal the stoutest heart. It must be regretted that it has not been possible to employ a yet larger number, and still more that there are localities to which it appears impracticable to extend relief—by labour or ordinary public works; still the fact remains that there are nearly half a million of persons, representing five times that number of human beings, supported by labour; more than 150,000*l.* is distributed weekly amongst the people; and however comparatively useless the work, the people, with few exceptions, are orderly; they are governed. The money so earned is free from the reproach which justly attaches to the only alternative, gratuitous alms, which it must never be forgotten was in September last the alternative, and the only alternative, between the results now obtained and the almost total starvation of an entire class of the community. The people generally are characterized by the most exemplary, the most astonishing resignation and fortitude; and even the partial stoppage of a work, when inevitable, either from violence to the officers, or from want of foresight or power on our part, or on that of the counties, to provide others, is a most serious evil. We have repeatedly adverted to the obloquy that has been heaped upon us for the administration of duties strictly limited and defined either by Acts of Parliament, the well-considered instructions of Government, or the very acts of the public itself, with whom the responsibility of initiating by their presentment sessions the so-called useless works, or refusing to present useful works, rests. We have been held accountable for results which have arisen entirely from want of cordial earnest co-operation on the part of local parties with our offices; and in some instances, from actual opposition to rules and arrangements made for the protection of these very parties, and the systematic conduct of so enormous a machinery."

I fully admit that there have been faults and misfortunes—that there have been many errors (and in so large and extensive a system how was it possible errors could be avoided?)—yet in spite of these things, it is impossible to deny that very great amount of relief has been afforded, and that thousands have been prevented from dying by starvation; and though we may regret that the money has not for all purposes been so well spent as it might have been, that abuses have prevailed, and that improper persons have been put upon the works, even when the destitute were dying by their side; nevertheless, an enormous amount of human suffering has been avoided. I hope, by the experience of the autumn, the people of Ireland have become alive to the necessity of exerting themselves, and I trust they will do so; for without their co-operation no effort of the Government can avail to carry on with greater care and precision the system we propose to substitute for that of public works. The reports of many of our most intelligent officers have suggested the expediency of providing food instead of labour for the people. In the first place, they have stated that there are many classes of persons, and those the most destitute, by whom labour cannot be performed, and to whom therefore relief is not given. They have stated also that in many parts of the country crowds flock to the works who are unable from weakness to perform their task, who faint and die upon the works, and to whom it is infinitely more humane to administer food than to afford the means of earning it. Many persons who, a few months ago, could earn even large wages by task-work are now unable to earn enough to procure themselves subsistence. The temptation to abuse will be infinitely less if relief is afforded in food, than when it is given by wages for labour. Considerable expense will also be saved in the staff maintained for the purpose of checking abuses; and I believe the same or even a less sum, will go much further in preventing famine and starvation. An extension of works beyond their present limit is almost impossible; and I confess, whatever objection there may be to gratuities or contributions of food, I do not see at present—as the hon. Member for Limerick himself has fairly admitted—any other alternative. The details which have been given of the misery of the Irish people may well make us shudder; and I conceive this system of relief is the only and the best resource we have for mitigating the evil. I wish to say a word or two with reference to an observation of the noble Lord the Member for Bandon, who stated that the Government had abstained until a late period from affording supplies to one part of Ireland. Food depôts have now been opened by the Government in that district; but in the very letter which was quoted by the noble Lord, an instance is mentioned which shows what individual exertion may do even in the poorest districts. In the report of the Kilmoe relief committee it is stated, that the parish contains a population of 7,280 souls, of whom 7,000 are represented to be in actual want; yet the relief committee obtained large supplies of food from Cork, and by their exertions afforded sustenance to nearly 7,000 persons up to a very recent period. It may be thought the Government were somewhat hard-hearted in refusing to open the food depôts at an earlier period; but I believe the course which they took produced a most beneficial effect, by stimulating private enterprise, and leading to considerable importations of grain. There is one other point to which I shall refer, because it was brought under the notice of the House by a Gentleman who is perfectly incapable of stating what he does not believe to be founded in fact—I mean the hon. and gallant Member opposite (Colonel Conolly). That hon. Gentleman stated that no issues had been recently made from the depôt at Sligo to relief committees; and that there was the greatest want of food at that place. Two or three days ago, I received a report from the commissary stationed at the depôt in Sligo, in which he states, that during three weeks of January, the period to which the hon. and gallant Officer refers, there were issued to the relief committees, or to the poor, 146 tons of Indian meal, Indian corn, Egyptian wheat, enough, at the ordinary calculation, to keep 40,400 people for a week. I have only one other statement to make in regard to Sligo. It is very difficult to meet a general statement; but where particulars are given as to some one certain place, it is easy enough to obtain explanation. Now, the amount of the supply in Sligo was, as I understand, upon the 27th of January, from 1,200 to 1,400 tons of American grain, from 600 to 1,000 tons of wheat, several hundred tons of meal, two cargoes of buckwheat, 833 barrels of Indian meal, and three cargoes of Indian corn, amounting to 943 tons. I think I have established the point, that large issues have been made, and that large supplies were on hand. [Lord Clements: Where have the supplies been given?] They have been given in a great variety of places. I hope my noble Friend will excuse me, if I do not pronounce the Irish names correctly. [The right hon. Gentleman read a long list of relief committees at different places in the county of Donegal to which supplies had been issued.] Upon the best consideration (he continued) we have been able to give the subject, we have resolved to extend the system already existing, giving rations either by distribution or sale of food in the electoral districts of Ireland. The hon. Member for Dublin (Mr. Hamilton) endeavoured to establish this system in the electoral divisions with which he is connected; so did the hon. Member for Kildare; and they were checked only by the practice not being legal under the provisions of the existing poor law. We now propose to legalize that system throughout Ireland, and to carry on by law what we have been carrying on, not illegally indeed hitherto, but without explicit sanction; and we propose to carry it on by the assistance of relief committees, enabling them to distribute food, cooked or uncooked. There are many hundreds of these relief committees in operation; and it was a matter of great satisfaction to Her Majesty's Government, as I believe it will be to the House, to hear that from all the reports we have received, the most beneficial effects have attended those proceedings. Large subscriptions have been drawn out by the establishment of this system. It is said to have given more assistance than any other which has been tried; and the people are able to go to work, having had a meal of nourishing soup beforehand, and receiving another on their return. There is one advantage which must not be overlooked as derived from this system. It enables the people to cultivate their land. At present, I believe, cultivation is greatly neglected. As great a breadth of wheat has been sown as usual, yet no doubt a great number of the smaller occupiers have been utterly unable to cultivate their ground, because for subsistence they have had to resort to the public works. I hope, by this means, they will now be able to cultivate their own ground. A large portion of the crops of Ireland are spring crops. The time for tilling the ground is approaching; and I hope that labour will be set free for this purpose, by the discontinuance of the works, and that those who obtain the means of subsistence from the gratuitous distribution of food will be able to cultivate their own plots, or hire themselves to neighbouring farmers, and that even the small wages obtained from the farmers may enable them to obtain a further supply of food for the maintenance of their families; and, should such be the result, the object of the Government will be effectually answered. I do not think it advisable to adopt the suggestion of the hon. Member for Wycombe (Mr. B. Osborne); and I am not prepared to say that men should be paid wages from the money of the State for cultivating their own land. I must call the serious attention of the House to the two great difficulties pressing upon Ireland at this time. The first is, the existence of a famine almost unexampled in the history of civilized nations; and the other is, what I believe is impending over the country—a total change in the social system of Ireland, which was designated at a large public meeting held in the county of Mayo, as "the social system based on the potato." However absurd the phrase may appear, I believe it only states what is really the fact. A large portion of the people of Ireland lived entirely upon potatoes, which they grew for themselves in their small plots of ground. Others were supported, not by wages in money, but by an allowance of potatoes from the produce of the farms on which they worked. But a large proportion of the population depended upon food raised by themselves or given to them; and in no case did they purchase it with wages. Although the potato may possibly resume its place in the social economy of Ireland—I cannot imagine a greater misfortune—yet I think, after the experience of the last two years, and with no great prospect before us of future years, it is not probable that so large a portion of the population will depend for their sustenance on potatoes cultivated by themselves. It is necessary that they should purchase food; and I am sorry to hear the remarks which have been made in reference to small dealers, through whom alone that food can be made accessible. The existence of that class seems to me indispensably necessary for the future, to enable the peasantry to subsist. If they are to buy their food, there must be people to sell it; and I can imagine no greater benefit than the establishment in small villages of dealers from whom the people can purchase food with the wages they earn by labour. The hon. Member for Coventry (Mr. Williams), and also the hon. Member for Bath (Mr. Roebuck), seemed to think that all the miseries of Ireland would be overcome by establishing a poor law. The hon. Member for Coventry spoke of the necessity of a poor law in the time of Elizabeth, and argued precisely as if there were none in Ireland. But though, under ordinary circumstances, an extension of the poor law might be sufficient to meet the case, no one can suppose that it is adequate either to meet the present calamity, or to enable the country to pass through a state of transition. Of the Bill introduced upon that subject, I may be permitted to say this much, that it is not expressed so as to extend indiscriminate assistance in all circumstances to the able-bodied. To the aged, the infirm, the impotent, relief will be given out of the workhouse. But provisions are introduced which carefully guard against relief out of the workhouse to others, except when the workhouse is full. Other provisions are made to meet a case which has been pressed upon us by more than one person, namely, where fever or infectious disease exists in a workhouse. In such a case it would be murder to require persons to enter within its walls. Yet, under such circumstances, no one would say that the poor ought to be deprived of their subsistence. My noble Friend stated his intention of introducing a clause specifying cases of exception from the general rule; but I do think it is indispensably necessary that the workhouse should be retained as a test so long as relief can be given in a workhouse. The hon. Member for Bath, using an expression which I certainly never heard from my noble Friend, says that my noble Friend had promised a scheme which would regenerate Ireland; and my hon. Friend who spoke before me says that he sees no proper plan of relief at all in the measures proposed. Now, without professing at all to enter upon the measures relative to the grand-jury laws and other questions to which the hon. Member for Wycombe referred, I must say that I certainly do think that the measures proposed by Government do contain a not uncomprehensive plan for affording facilities for the employment of the people. It is evident that if the change to which I have alluded is to take place, and the people are no longer to subsist upon food grown by themselves, but purchased by their labour, there must of necessity be a change in the manner in which they are employed. The hon. Member has blamed my noble Friend for having spoken in terms of commendation of the system of small holdings which exists in the north of Ireland, and which has not produced the misery in the north which they are supposed to have done in other parts of the country. They, however, are very different from the small cottier holdings in the south and western parts of Ireland, which have produced unalloyed evil; and I do think that one good consequence which will flow from the failure in the potato crop will be, that this description of people, who depended entirely on the crops grown by themselves, and who have hitherto been living on the borders of destitution, year after year, will cease to depend on their own plot of potatoes for their subsistence; and I hope that the result will be that they will be changed into honest, independent, daily labourers, who will be paid by wages, and who will, with those wages, purchase the food they need. The scheme which was first developed in the Treasury Minute of the 1st December, is, I think, well calculated to effect this object. The hon. Gentleman says that that Treasury Minute ought to have come much sooner, and that if it had, many proprietors would have availed themselves of its provisions at an earlier period. If proprietors had been so anxious as the hon. Member says, they might have availed themselves of the 6th clause of the Act which was passed last Session, authorizing proprietors to borrow money for the improvement of their estates, and to take twenty years for repayment. That Act was introduced by the noble Lord opposite (the Earl of Lincoln), and the terms of the Treasury Minute were not so very different but that the proprietors might have availed themselves of the one nearly as readily as the other. Without adverting to the details of the plans we have proposed, I may just mention that the system of loans secured upon estates appears to me an unobjectionable mode of relief. The agency of Government is not introduced beyond what is necessary to secure repayment; and it will be the means, I think, of employing the people to a large extent. I believe, indeed, that many people well acquainted with Ireland look to that system as the means of absorbing a large portion of the unemployed population. Loans of this description are, I think, not objectionable within reasonable limits. I admit, that were the State to become a great lender under all times and circumstances, it would be exceedingly injudicious; but, in the transition state which I believe Ireland is now going through, I consider it not only an unobjectionable measure, but one calculated to confer great benefits on Ireland, with only a risk of very slight loss to this country. Then there is the proposal with respect to general drainage, or, to use the new term, arterial drainage, under the superintendence of the Board of Works, which, in many cases, proprietors could not execute for themselves. In the case of the improvement of his own estate, or the reclamation of his own lands, or the building of his own farmhouses or mills, it is quite right that the proprietor should undertake the conduct of such works as these himself; but when a system of drainage is required to pass through the lands of more proprietors than one, it is impossible for any one proprietor to get it executed, and it is therefore necessary to call in the agency of the Board of Works. For the last few years an Act of a similar character has been in operation with the greatest benefit to all the parties concerned; and I expect that the proposed Bill will improve the machinery for this purpose. The security is perfect, the benefit to all parties is obvious, and I know no evil likely to accrue from it. A great deal has been said about the Bill for the reclamation of waste lands; and certainly a more extraordinary description than that which the hon. Member for Wycombe has given of that Bill I have never heard. For myself, I do not attach so much importance to this measure as some hon. Gentlemen seem to do; but the object in view in introducing it is very different from that which the hon. Member has represented. Many Gentlemen who have spoken to-night have stated, what is very true, that there are in many parts of Ireland large tracts of country in possession of persons who are merely nominal owners, who cannot avail themselves of loans and other facilities for the improvement of their estates, which these persons, if otherwise situated, would gladly do. It is possible, therefore, before any measure can be brought into practice to enable those persons to sell their incumbered estates, and before the property can pass into the hands of those who have the disposition and the means of improving it, through the provisions of this Bill, that there may be the means of furnishing employment to considerable numbers of people. It was with this view that the Bill was introduced—that the Government might have the power of purchasing tracts of 500 acres, or thereabouts, and reclaiming them; and in this way afford employment to a limited number of labourers, for whom in no other circumstances could employment be found. A further measure has also been alluded to—I mean the Bill for the encouragement of fisheries. Curing establishments have been set up in three different places in Ireland. It is no doubt exceedingly desirable to turn the attention of the people on the west coast to the ample means of employment which may be found in the fisheries; but, I confess, I am not very sanguine, after the experience of the old bounties for fisheries in Ireland, that the people will avail themselves of the facilities we propose to hold out to them. The hon. Gentleman seemed to have forgotten, when he talked of the number of nominal owners of land, and the mischiefs they have occasioned, that my noble Friend had declared his intention of introducing a Bill for facilitating the sale of incumbered estates. I believe that a greater benefit we could not give to Ireland. In no country in the world are there so many estates whose owners are merely nominal; and much benefit, I think, will arise from their being transferred to the hands of more enterprising persons, who are able and willing to expend capital and employ labourers in their improvement. These measures, then, the loans for the improvement of private estates, an extension of the system of drainage by the Board of Works, partial reclamation of waste lands, encouragement of fisheries, and an improved poor law, are the measures to which the Government look for the improvement of Ireland; and which will lay the foundation, I hope, of a sounder system of things in that country. But, before I sit down, I must return, for a moment, to that which is the most pressing effect of this calamity—I mean the deficiency of food. The hon. Member has not overstated the loss of food. Even if I were merely to estimate it at its money value, and to say, that from one of the poorest countries of Europe had been taken by the visitation of Providence food to the value of 15,000,000*l*. sterling, that would be enough to call down the sympathy of this House on behalf of that unfortunate country. But I must add, that this quantity has been taken from that description of food on which the poorer classes depended for their subsistence. There may have been abuses and misbehaviour on the part of the landlords; yet we cannot conceal from ourselves that hundreds are dying every week from want. I can assure the House, that it is with pain I can ill attempt to describe, that I peruse the accounts which day after day reach us of the deaths by starvation in the west of Ireland. No exertions of a Government, or, I will add, of private charity, can supply a complete remedy for the existing calamity. It is a national visitation, sent by Providence; and we must, if not to the extent which some hon. Gentlemen have contemplated, still, to a large extent, we must come forward and assist our suffering brethren in Ireland. Sir, I do not believe this country will refuse to render assistance, or will be disposed to withhold its aid under such an extremity. I hope this will be but a temporary calamity under which Ireland is labouring. I hope that before next harvest we shall have large supplies of corn; and that, if it please God, the next harvest will be a good one; but some months of severe suffering, I fear, must intervene. It is so much the more necessary that immediate measures be taken for the relief of the existing distress; and I hope, that, both in England and in Scotland, no endeavour to afford assistance will be wanting. I must, at the same time, however, impress upon Irish Gentlemen that they also have duties to perform; and that, if we give assistance to the Irish people, we have a right to call upon them for their personal aid on the same behalf. No pecuniary aid which we can give, can be as available as it ought to be towards the relief of the present extremity, unless it be distributed through the agency of persons resident on the spot. They alone can know who are the really destitute—they alone can visit day by day the cabins of the poor who are perishing from want—they alone can ascertain the full wretchedness of their unhappy occupants; and when I see it described in a letter, as I have seen it to-day, that in six cabins, visited successively by the writer, he found a corpse lying on the floor in each, I feel that such scenes can only be prevented by the exertions and assistance of persons residing on the spot. I cannot convey to the House the feelings with which I advert to these scenes. I only wish I could impress upon all, as strongly as I feel it myself, the necessity which there is for the unremitting exertions of the residents in Ireland, and of large and extensive charity, not only from the private resources of this country—for no private funds can be adequate—but also from our public and national resources.

Debate adjourned.

House adjourned at a quarter past Twelve o'clock.

HOUSE OF LORDS,

Tuesday, February 2, 1847.

MINUTES.] PUBLIC BILLS.—1ª Buck Wheat, &c. Importation.

PETITIONS PRESENTED. From Guardians of the Poor of the Rye Union, for the Repeal of the Poor Removal Act.—From Landed Proprietors, Farmers, and others of the County of Linlithgow, against Sugar Distillations.—From Inhabitants of Ballymena, complaining that they are about to be placed under the Jurisdiction of a Baronial Extraordinary Presentment Session; and of other matters mentioned in the Petition.

LAW OF ENTAILS.

The DUKE of RICHMOND moved for the reappointment of the Select Committee of 1845, to inquire into the expediency of a legislative enactment being introduced, to allow the possessors of entailed estates to charge such estates with a sum to be limited, for the purpose of draining and otherwise permanently improving the same. Many noble Lords connected with Ireland had begged that this Act might be extended to that country. This had been done, but the difficulty was to induce the occupiers at will to consent to the powers given by it. In England, if any occupier refused his consent, the proprietor might give him notice to quit; but in Ireland notices might be given, but they were not very effectually obeyed. The Act, consequently, had not worked well there. The masters in Chancery required each occupier to make an affidavit that he had given his consent. Under these circumstances, he thought it would be better to refer the subject back to the Committee that prepared the Bill, with the view of seeing what amendments could be made in it. He was afraid, from having a cold, that he was misrepresented in what he stated last night in giving this notice. He saw that it was stated that he intended to call the attention of the House to this subject, for the purpose of getting rid of the law of entail. He said nothing of the kind, for his object was to enable the possessors of landed property to do that which would make the law of entail no grievance to the people of the country at large.

LORD BROUGHAM said, that he hoped his noble Friend would press for a report as speedily as possible, because he thought it would throw much light on the state of Ireland, and because he thought the measure was one of the most unexceptionable measures of relief that could be given to that country.

The DUKE of RICHMOND said, that he would do his utmost that the report should be laid as speedily as possible on the Table of their Lordships. He would mention that there were many Irish landlords who were desirous of taking advantage of this Act.

The Motion was then agreed to, and the Committee reappointed.

THE USE OF SUGAR IN BREWERIES, &c.

LORD STANLEY presented petitions from Linlithgow and Dalkeith, against the use of sugar in breweries and distilleries. He did not wish to enter upon any premature discussion on this subject; but he must say that if the measures were to be of any effect whatever, if, in fact, they were to do good or harm, they would effect an enormous change. They would affect most materially the consumer, the Irish and Scotch distiller, whose interests, he must say, ought not to be affected by any hasty legislation. Without wishing to express any opinion as to the scale of duties proposed to be levied, or as affecting those different interests on which they were proposed to be levied by Her Majesty's Government, he hoped that no measure would be passed through Parliament, without all parties having their case fully stated and fully considered. There was one point to which he would call the attention of his noble Friend the President of the Board of Trade, which was an important matter, and that was, the relation to be established by the law now and in future between malt and sugar, as used in breweries and distilleries. By the Act of last Session, a material alteration was made in the sugar duties; but that was not the only alteration intended to take place. The duty on British colonial sugar was 14*s*., and on foreign sugar 21*s*. Now, the differential duty of 7*s*. was to be in process of reduction until the year 1851, when the duties would be assimilated, and the duty on foreign sugar would, consequently, be 14*s*. If sugar were used in breweries and distilleries, and if foreign sugar should enter into competition with malt at its present rate, the reduction of one-third of the duty on foreign sugar at the expiration of that period would give the foreign producer a very great advantage. In that case it would supersede the use of malt in breweries. He did not mean to say what course should be adopted; but he must say that Parliament ought not to adopt any measures without being fully satisfied, and unless the country was fully satisfied, as to the effect of the measures which the Government was about to introduce. They might either repeal so much of the Act of last year as related to the progressive decrease of the duty on sugar, or they might take a different course, and accompany the reduction of the duty on foreign sugar with a reduction of the duty on malt, so as to keep permanently the existing relation between the duty on sugar and the duty on malt. If these two articles were to compete on a fair and equal footing, and if no reduction were to be made in the duty on malt, the foreign producer would be placed in a better situation than the grower of malt in this country. He would, therefore, conclude by asking his noble Friend the President of the Board of Trade whether there would be any objection to lay on the Table a copy of the report made to Her Majesty's Government by the Commissioners of Excise as to the comparative value of malt and sugar when used in breweries and distilleries?

The Earl of CLARENDON said, that he would, to-morrow, tell his noble Friend whether the report could be communicated without inconvenience to the House. With respect to the other matters mentioned by his noble Friend, he thought it would be obviously inconvenient to discuss these measures, as they were not now before the House. He could only assure his noble Friend that any interest that could be affected by these measures would have full opportunity of being heard; and that the matter would receive the fullest consideration from Her Majesty's Government before the measures were proposed.

Lord BROUGHAM said, that nobody could be more averse than he was to complain of any misrepresentation; but at this time, when so much anxiety, almost feverish anxiety, prevailed on the subject of the existing distress in Ireland, one was naturally very anxious that what he said should not be misrepresented. He was stated to have expressed an opinion as to a poor law for Ireland. He had expressly stated, in presenting the Liverpool petition, that he would give no opinion whatever as to what sort of relief there should be. He was represented to have said that it ought not to fall on the Irish landlords. What he said was, that it should not fall on the mortgagees. He said, that if they were to relieve the country by throwing it on the mortgagees, they would commit one of the greatest blunders that was ever committed, for they would only be taxing the landlords through the means of the mortgagees. He gave no opinion that they should not let it fall on the Irish landlords.

POOR LAWS.

Lord STANLEY said, that he wished to ask a question of the noble Marquess opposite. Several Bills had been introduced and laid on the Table of the other House, which would give increased powers to the Poor Law Commissioners. These Commissioners, he understood, were to be the principal machinery to carry into effect the Irish Poor Bill. He understood that it was the intention of the Government to remodel the whole constitution of the Board of Commissioners. The poor law for Ireland, he believed, was to be separate from the poor law for England. Now, in reading the Bill which had reference to Ireland, they would see that the whole machinery was entrusted to the Poor Law Commissioners; yet there was no Bill before Parliament showing what alteration was intended to be made in the constitution of that Board. He, therefore, wished to know whether it was the intention of the Government to remodel that Commission; whether the Irish Poor Law Commission would be wholly independent of the English one; and whether the way in which this remodelling was proposed to take place would be laid before their Lordships before the Bill which would confer those increased powers on the Commission?

The Marquess of LANSDOWNE was understood to say that it was the intention of the Government to remodel the Poor Law Commission, but what effect that would have on the Poor Law Commission in Ireland, would be considered when the Bill came before the House; but at present he could not say what its effects would be. The Bill to which the noble Lord referred was not of a temporary but of a permanent nature. There would be a Poor Law Commissioner resident in Ireland.

Lord STANLEY said, that as the measure would deeply affect the vital interests of the country, he thought that they ought to have before them the full detals as to the alterations intended to be made in the constitution of that Board.

The Marquess of LANSDOWNE said, that he would give the noble Lord the earliest information in his power on the subject.

House adjourned to Thursday.

HOUSE OF COMMONS,

Tuesday, February 2, 1847.

MINUTES.] PUBLIC BILLS.—2º Labouring Poor (Ireland); Destitute Persons (Ireland); Poor Relief (Ireland).

Reported.—Chelsea Pensions.

PETITIONS PRESENTED. From Great Bolton, and other places, for Limiting the Hours of Labour in Factories.—From Bulwell, and other places, for Repeal of the Poor Removal Act.—From Linlithgow, and other places, against the Use of Sugar in Breweries and Distilleries.—From Clackmannan, against the Alteration of the Duties on Rum.—From Longford, for Repeal of the County Works Presentments (Ireland) Bill.—From Dublin, for Reduction of the Duty on Tea.

CONVICTION OF TWO CHILDREN.

DR. BOWRING rose to put a question respecting a transaction, the circumstances of which had already been made public. The statement put into his hands was this: Two children, the son and daughter of a man named Lee, who had lived at Chingford, Essex, for two years and a half, occupying a cottage for which they paid 2*s.* 6*d.* a-week, were detected by the foreman of a farmer picking up and eating turnips; he took them to Chingford, in order to look for a police officer, then to Waltham Abbey, five miles off, to try to find a magistrate, and then brought them back three miles to Mr. Preston, a magistrate at Sewardstone, before whom the foreman swore that the six turnips found in their possession were worth 3*d.*, and thereupon the children were convicted in a penalty and costs amounting to 1*l.* 0*s.* 6*d.*, and in default of payment sentenced to fourteen days' imprisonment in Ilford Gaol, whither also, during the severe frost, they were on the same day taken. The following evening the father, who had borrowed the money, paid the fine. The father and mother were willing to swear that they had nothing to eat on those two days, Saturday and Sunday, but a 2 lb loaf. On the Monday, the day after the children were released, a man and his daughter, who had been committed to Hertford gaol by the same magistrate, for stealing coals to the value of 1*d.* were released, the grand jury having ignored the Bill. He begged to ask whether the Home Secretary had directed his attention to this conduct?

SIR G. GREY answered, that no representation had been made to him with respect to the facts referred to. A statement had appeared upon the subject in the newspapers very much to the same effect with that now made, and in consequence of the notice of this question, his attention had been called to that account; but in *The Times* of that day (yesterday) the hon. Member would find a letter giving a very different narrative indeed of the transaction. The only additional account which he (Sir G. Grey) had received was one obtained on a reference to the commissioners of police, Chingford being within the metropolitan police district; and that confirmed in all essential particulars the curate's statement in *The Times* of that day, showing that Mr. Stephens, who sent the original narrative, was very greatly misinformed indeed as to the facts of the case. It was quite true, that these children, whose ages were 11 and 12, not 6 and 7, were apprehended for stealing turnips; but they were growing in a field in which there were no cattle; and the children were fined 2*s.* 6*d.* and costs. There were some statements in the police report with respect to the habits of the family, into which he (Sir G. Grey) did not think he should do right to enter; they were gypsies, and very well known in that part of the country, and they were in possession of a pony. He should be happy to put that statement into the hands of the hon. Member, and he would then see that a complexion was given to the case very different from that which it presented as originally stated.

MILLBANK PENITENTIARY.

MR. T. DUNCOMBE understood that the report of the third commissioner upon Millbank prison had been sent in to the Home Office. He wished to know whether there was any objection to lay that report on the Table; and also whether in a future edition of the Millbank inquiry he would order the evidence to be attached to the report of the commissioners in the same volume?

SIR G. GREY had a conversation with the hon. and learned Member for Winchester on this subject, and when that hon. Gentleman told him that he intended to make a distinct report on the subject, and asked in what way it was to be done, he replied, that as the other two commissioners had agreed in their report, no report could be received from him, but a letter was to be sent to the Secretary of State. He had since received a document which purported to be a report. He had requested the hon. Member to alter the form, so that the same statements could be made. He had to add that the non-appearance of the evidence was attributable entirely to inadvertence—to a misapprehension on the part of the printer.

MR. B. ESCOTT said, the right hon.

Baronet had stated correctly the conversation that had taken place; but, on looking at the words of the commission, he found that he was bound to make a report.

PRIVILEGE—HOWARD v. GOSSET.

SIR F. THESIGER: Sir, I wish to take the earliest opportunity of communicating to the House a matter of very great importance connected with its privileges. It will be recollected that some time ago an action was brought against the Sergeant-at-Arms for having, in obedience to the warrant of the Speaker, issued by authority of this House, arrested a Mr. Howard, and brought him to the bar for the purpose of being examined. In that action the Sergeant, by leave of the House, pleaded a justification—that he had acted under its authority; and, issues in law having been raised, the argument took place in the Court of Queen's Bench, and after considerable time taken by the court to deliberate upon its judgment, a majority of the court decided against the justification. The judgment itself was not more unfavourable to this House, than the principles upon which it proceeded; and which, if they had been allowed to be considered as settled and established law, would have placed our most important privileges at the mercy of the courts of justice. The subject having been brought to the attention of the House, a Select Committee was appointed, for the purpose of considering the best course to be adopted in vindication of those privileges; and after very careful consideration of all the circumstances, looking to the grounds upon which the judgment proceeded, and the Committee being exceedingly desirous not to recommend any extreme measures in assertion of our privileges as long as any hope remained of having them decided by a legal tribunal, a report was presented to this House recommending that a writ of error should be brought upon the judgment. Upon a division, a majority of the House acquiesced in that recommendation. A writ of error was accordingly brought. In the course of last year the question was argued before the Court of Exchequer Chamber; and I have the satisfaction to inform the House that this very day that court has unanimously pronounced a decision, reversing the judgment of the Court of Queen's Bench. It may be important to mention, that although, in obedience to the wishes of this House, the question as to its right to declare what were its privileges, was argued before the Court of Appeal, yet the nature of the case was such that it was unnecessary for that court to pronounce any decision upon that important subject; but I may be permitted to say, that the result of this inquiry, confirming and sanctioning, as it does, the recommendation of the Committee adopted by the House, places us in a much more favourable position for the future in asserting and vindicating our privileges, without apprehension that there will be hereafter any assumed control or authority of the courts of law to interfere. If the House will permit me, as it is desirable that it should be fully informed of all these proceedings, I will take the liberty of moving that it be furnished with a copy of the shorthand writer's notes of the argument and of the judgment of the Court of Exchequer Chamber in the case of Gossett v. Howard, for the purpose of their being printed for the use of the House.

Motion agreed to *nem. con.*

POSTPONEMENT OF MOTIONS—ABSENTEES.

MR. ROEBUCK felt great difficulty in giving up the Motion of which he had given notice, with the view of extending the Act 5 and 6 Vict. c. 35, to Ireland, because it seemed to him to be a necessary preliminary to accepting the propositions of the noble Lord (Lord J. Russell). That being the case, if he conceded his right to precedence on this occasion, he felt that he had some claim upon the noble Lord to be allowed the earliest possible opportunity that the noble Lord could afford him for the purpose of bringing the question before the House.

LORD J. RUSSELL would make a statement to the hon. and learned Gentleman, which he trusted would be so far satisfactory to him that it would give him the prospect of bringing forward his proposition on an early day. As soon as the House should have consented to the second reading of the Bill debated last night, his right hon. Friend the Chancellor of the Exchequer would give notice of the day, and it would be an early day, on which he would propose to bring forward the whole question as connected with the finances of the country. And then the hon. and learned Gentleman would, of course, be able to propose any Motion which he might think fit and proper with a view to that part of the subject.

MR. ROEBUCK would accede to the

proposal of the noble Lord, and postpone his Motion, it being understood that he should have the power of moving it on the occasion referred to by the noble Lord without any technical objection being made to his doing so.

Mr. H. GRATTAN, who had given notice of his intention to move for returns relative to absentees from Ireland, and the property of such absentees, said, that he was placed in a similar situation to that of the hon. Member for Bath. That hon. Member stated that his Motion was a preliminary to others; and his (Mr. Grattan's) Motion, he could assure the House, was a corollary to the hon. and learaed Gentleman's. He had already obtained a return from his own county of the number of absentees; and he could not suppose that the noble Lord, or the Chief Secretary for Ireland, would refuse the returns he wanted. For his part he saw no difficulty in making them, and he thought they would be a great assistance to the hon. and learned Member for Bath.

Mr. LABOUCHERE could not accede to the Motion of which his hon. Friend had given notice. If he would bring it on upon a future occasion, he (Mr. Labouchere) would then state the difficulty which presented itself to his mind, and which induced him to be of opinion that the returns required could not be made.

LABOURING POOR (IRELAND) BILL—ADJOURNED DEBATE.

On the Order of the Day for proceeding with the Adjourned Debate on the Second Reading of the Labouring Poor (Ireland) Bill,

Mr. G. A. HAMILTON said, he was anxious to commence the remarks which he should feel it his duty to offer to the House, by stating that he had heard with much satisfaction the greater part of the speech made last night by the right hon. Gentleman the Chancellor of the Exchequer, and especially the latter part of that speech, in which he had expressed, in so feeling a manner, his deep sympathy with the sufferings of the poor in Ireland, who were now visited with so heavy a calamity —not that he (Mr. Hamilton) had ever supposed either that the right hon. Gentleman or any of his Colleagues were wanting in those feelings of humanity and compassion which the occasion had so generally excited among all classes of the charitable and generous people of England; but really it was almost impossible for any one who had not been in Ireland during the last few months to realize to himself the extent of the calamity, and the effect it was producing upon the lower classes in that country. Even in the part of Ireland where he resided, twenty miles only from the metropolis, within reach of markets, and where, he would say, everything had been done that could be done to assist and relieve the poor, it was most melancholy to observe the effect which this revolution had produced. It was most melancholy to observe the gradual sinking of the small farmer from comfort to poverty. It was most melancholy to observe the gradual disappearance of their few luxuries, their slender comforts—the pig, the poultry, the household furniture—under the slow but certain advance of this heavy calamity. It was still more melancholy to observe the effects which the high price of provisions had produced upon the labourers employed on the public works, and upon the families of the labouring classes. The squalid looks, the emaciated appearance, the downcast, desponding countenance, so unusual with Irishmen—all told the tale of famine in language too plain to be misunderstood. And he knew enough of Ireland to know that if this could be the case near the metropolis, the sufferings of the poor in the remoter districts must, indeed, be beyond description. But these things, he thought, required to be seen to be realized in their full extent. There were, however, some points in the speech of the right hon. Gentleman on which it was his duty to remark in a different tone. The right hon. Gentleman had accused the gentlemen of Ireland of supineness, because they had not taken advantage of the 9th Vic., c. 2, for the improvement of land in Ireland, or of the Drainage of Estates' Act, 9th and 10th Vic., c. 101; and that they presented readily under the first Labour-rate Act, passed at the beginning of the last Session, while they condemned so strongly that passed at the end of the Session—namely, the 9th and 10th Vict., c. 107. Now, with regard to the first Act, he would first observe that that Act, like the Drainage Act, had been tried, and it had been found impossible to work it where the proprietor of land was either limited in his estate or incumbered. He would remind the hon. Baronet near him, the late Secretary for the Home Department, who had charge of the Bill in the House of Commons, of a conversation which he (Mr. Hamilton) and his hon. Friend the Member for the city of Derry had had with him early in the last Session, in which they had stated very strongly, that if, as a preliminary proceeding, it was necessary in such cases to go to the Court of Chancery, the Bill would prove inoperative. The Bill had left that House without such a clause; but one had been introduced in the other House by the law Lords. Immediately on its passing, a friend of his, a gentleman of extensive landed property in the north of Ireland—Mr. Macartney, of Lissanour—endeavoured to act upon it. He had petitioned the Lord Chancellor, by his solicitor, without employing counsel, as seemed to be provided in the Act of the 8th and 9th Vic., c. 56. The Chancellor, however, required to have counsel, and counsel was employed. The Lord Chancellor then ordered a reference to a master; this entailed additional expense; the master stated that it was impossible he could report for several months, and Mr. Macartney was at length advised by his law agent and counsel to abandon the attempt, in consequence of the delay and expense it would occasion. So much for the supineness of the landed gentry as respected that Act. Neither could it be attributed to the landed gentry that the "Million Act" for the drainage of estates, had proved inoperative. It was well known that by what he supposed must have been a mistake in the interpretation clause, fixing upon the term "owner" the signification which was attached to it in the Tithe Composition Act, 1 and 2 Vic. c. 109, all persons having limited estates, which was the case with nine out of ten of the landed gentry of Ireland, were excluded from its operation. The right hon. Gentleman had also, he thought, borne rather hardly upon the relief committees in Ireland—he had accused them of having improperly put persons on their relief lists, who were not fit objects for relief, and of having afterwards thrown upon the officers of Government the responsibility of removing them. Now he (Mr. Hamilton) was not prepared to deny that cases might have occurred in which persons of that description had been put upon the lists for relief; but then it should be recollected that they were placed in very difficult circumstances. They were composed not merely of the landed gentry, as might be supposed from the speech of the right hon. Gentleman, but they consisted of two magistrates only, delegated from the petty sessions, the clergy of different denominations in the barony, the chairman of the union, and the officers of constabulary and coast guard; and when lists of persons said to be in a state of starvation, and forwarded perhaps by the Roman Catholic clergyman of a parish, who knew better than any one else the condition of the poor, were brought before the relief committee, considering the excitement which prevailed when people were said to be starving, it was, he thought, too bad, that either the relief committees or the gentry should be charged with neglect, because it had happened in some cases that the names of persons not fully entitled to relief should have been found on those lists. And now with respect to the other charge made by the right hon. Gentleman against the gentry of Ireland, namely, that while they condemned the last Labour-rate Act, the 10th Vic., c. 107, they should have adopted readily the provisions of the first Labour-rate Act, the 9th Vic., c. 2. The right hon. Gentleman had stated, that there was no material difference between the two Acts. He (Mr. Hamilton) could not admit that that was the case. The difference was very essential. By the first Act the presentment sessions originated with the magistrates and ratepayers; by the first Act the usual notices of all works intended to be applied for were required; there was, therefore, time for preliminary inquiry as to the nature and usefulness of the works; by the first Act all applications approved of at baronial sessions were referred for final consideration to the county sessions: there was, therefore, ample time for the fullest deliberation at every stage; and then the works, when presented for, were executed under the ordinary county authorities. Under the last Act all these guards were done away with; the sessions were ordered by the Lord Lieutenant; no previous application for the works was required. The sessions were generally ordered at a moment of great excitement. There was no time or power of deliberating; there was no adjournment or reconsideration at a second sessions, provided the magistrates and ratepayers were called upon to present in the midst of assemblages of people almost starving, and clamorous for employment; and lastly, all control over the execution of the works afterwards was completely taken away. These constituted, in his opinion, essential differences between the two Acts. Having made these remarks upon the speech of the Chancellor of the Exchequer, he was anxious to assure Her Majesty's Ministers, that, whatever might be his opinions, he had no desire to look back with the view of speaking or judging harshly of their conduct; on the contrary, he was well aware of the great difficulties with which they had been surrounded, and he did not hesitate to say, that he thought the noble Lord, the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, and the right hon. Gentleman opposite, the Secretary for Ireland, were entitled to great praise for having taken upon themselves the responsibility of sanctioning the principle of productive employment. He felt bound to add, that considering the immense labour, the heavy charge, and the extensive and complicated administration committed to them, the Commissioners of Public Works had exhibited the most praiseworthy anxiety to discharge their difficult and important duties with advantage to the public. He would go further, and admit that he had entertained an impression that the commissariat department had not exhibited sufficient energy and activity; but having looked over the correspondence which had been laid on the Table, between Mr. Trevelyan and that department, it would be unjust if he was not to say that he felt he had been under a mistake; and he really thought no one could read that correspondence without admitting that it exhibited, on the part of all, great activity, great energy, and great sympathy for the poor of Ireland. But whatever might have been, or ought to have been, done, to avert or mitigate the calamity, he was sorry to be obliged to say, that, in his opinion, the difficulties of Ireland were still before them; and that it was the duty of every one who valued the lives or well-being of his fellow-creatures, and the maintenance of social order, to apply his mind to that consideration, without allowing himself to be influenced by any retrospect, and without reference to any political or party consideration. He was anxious, with a view to the fair and just consideration of the state of Ireland, and of the effect which that great calamity must necessarily have upon all the relations of society in that country, and of the means that might be taken to alleviate it, and prevent, as far as human means could prevent it, such disastrous results in future, that the House should give him their attention for a short time while he adduced a few facts which would illustrate some of the peculiarities of the state of things in Ireland, under its ordinary circumstances, and which, he thought, ought to be kept in mind in any general discussion or legislation on the subject. He did not mean to enter into details, but would confine himself to broad and distinct features; and first, he would take the case of the occupiers of land. Hon. Members had heard a good deal on that subject lately; and the hon. and learned Gentleman the Member for Bath had drawn a fearful picture of their ordinary condition. He (Mr. Hamilton) wished he had it in his power to say that the picture was overcoloured. But when the hon. and learned Member proceeded to describe his remedies, he (Mr. Hamilton) felt assured that he (Mr. Roebuck) had not estimated the extent and amount of the evils he had described, or realized sufficiently the actual state of things as regarded the occupation of land in Ireland. The census of 1841, and the commission with which he (Mr. Hamilton) had been connected, gave some extraordinary results in this respect. He should like to know what any hon. Member, conversant with land in this country, would think of the position of a farmer holding five acres of land, or even ten or fifteen? Why, of course, it would be said, there was no room for a man's industry on such a patch of land—he had much better be an independent labourer. But the total number of farms in Ireland above one acre being 690,000 in round numbers; 560,000, or five out of six, were under fifteen acres; and of these 306,000 under five acres; and the occupier being, almost in every case, dependent entirely upon the land for support, without manufactures, and without other occupation than that which this miserable patch of land afforded for himself and family. The real, and, perhaps, the best means of judging of the actual condition of Ireland in respect of occupation, would be found in the census return of 1841. The Commissioners had made a return and classification of the houses in each barony; the classification was fourfold. The fourth, or lowest class, was a mere hut—walls and floor mud; no windows, and consisting of one single room. The third was also a mere cabin; walls and floor of mud, but consisting of more rooms than one, and having windows. The second class were the farm-houses, and the first might be considered as the residences of the gentry and clergy. Now, if any hon. Member would turn to page 435 of the census, he would find there, that, excluding towns, there were 18,032 of the first-class houses, while there were no fewer than 1,075,000 of the third and fourth classes in the whole of Ireland, taking the best as well as the poorest counties—that is to say, more than eighty per cent of the houses in the counties of Ireland were mud with mud floors; and one-half of these consisting of a single room, without windows. To take one of the poorest counties, Mayo, for example, the disproportion would be found immensely larger. In Mayo there were 217 gentlemen's houses, while there were 63,408 of third and fourth class houses —the fourth class being 40,803, and the third class being 22,605. Or he would ask hon. Members to go with him to Skibbereen, where the distresses of poor people had excited so much commiseration; and what was the state of things there? Skibbereen was in the barony of Carbery West; the population of the two divisions of Carbery West was 87,946, the number of houses 14,763; of these no fewer than 10,020 were mere huts, consisting of a single room; 3,429 in the class only just above a hut, while the number of gentlemen's houses was only 146. So here they had, in a district consisting of nearly 200,000 acres, a population of 88,000, thirteen out of fourteen of whom were living in miserable cabins; and if they turned to the evidence taken before the Land Commission, of which he was a member, at Skibbereen, they would find a poor man named Michael Sullivan was examined as to the ordinary condition of the people: He was asked—

> " What is your general food for the family? Nothing at all but dry potatoes. Have you milk with your potatoes? Not a drop; I have no means of getting it. What bedsteads have you, or bedding? I have a chaff bed and bed-clothes, that would do my own business; but I am in want of a second (the poor man had five children); I cannot afford to have it. I cannot complain myself, but I could complain for others; there are others of the poor working class, as I am myself, who have no beds, no more than a gentleman or even a wealthy farmer would think too good for his pig, and they may lie in the clothes they wear by day."

When such was the ordinary condition of the great mass of the people, it was fearful to contemplate the consequences of such a visitation as the present. But there were other peculiarities in respect of the occupation of land in Ireland which had not yet been adverted to in the course of the debate, but which it was essential should be borne in mind when they were legislating on the subject. Nearly one-fourth of the arable land of Ireland—1,900,000 acres—was held by the occupiers in joint tenancy. Every one who knew anything of that system—a system under which two or three or more persons had each a common interest in the land—must know that it was a system destructive of the land, and equally destructive of the industry and comfort of the landholder. Then they had a large portion of the northwest and other parts of Ireland held in what was called rundale—that is, a man with a farm, of perhaps fifteen acres, held it in perhaps as many patches, a field here and a field there, sometimes half a mile apart; then they had another tenth, or rather more than a tenth, usually held in conacre—that is, the farmer manured, and the labourer planted his potatoes—or the labourer manured and planted, and worked out in labour the rent which he undertook to pay in the course of the year; thus they had in Ireland a population of small agriculturists —not independent labourers, as in this country—paid in wages by farmers with capital, and having every man within reach of him a magistrate, or a gentleman, to whom he looked up for advice and support —but a population of poor people, only half employed in letting their own patches of land—dependent entirely upon its produce for subsistence—badly housed, badly clothed, badly fed, with the additionally unfavourable circumstances of joint occupation—occupation in rundale and in conacre, and with, perhaps, one gentleman to every hundred families. He (Mr. Hamilton) would now take the case of the landlords; and the first question which would naturally occur was this—why did the landlords allow this conacre, and rundale, and joint tenancy system to continue? As far as they could, the resident landlords were gradually improving the nature of the occupation, and gradually correcting those abuses. But hon. Members acquainted only with England, could form no notion of the difficulties which landlords in Ireland had to contend with in such matters. He (Mr. Hamilton) would like to see the hon. and learned Member for Bath, who was so ready to lecture and to assail the landlords of Ireland for what he called the mismanagement of their properties—he would like to see that hon. Member try his hand in making partitions between joint tenants, and squaring and uniting the detached portions of a rundale farm. He suspected the hon. Member would find that the theory and the practice were different in those things. But to return to the state of things as regarded the proprietors of land. The families of the resident gentry, as he had already observed, constituted in most counties about one per cent of the families of the whole population: this included the clergy, and was, of course, much above the average in the poorer parts of Ireland. This consideration suggested, of course, the subject of absenteeism. He did not intend to enter upon that subject at present. It had been stated by some hon. Member in the course of the debate—he believed by the Chancellor of the Exchequer—that some of the large absentee proprietors were amongst the best landlords of Ireland. He fully admitted that this was the case; but he was bound to add, that they formed the exception, rather than the rule. But the class of absentees, from whom Ireland suffered the most, was not, perhaps, so much the large, as what he might call the small, absentees; he meant those who derived comparatively small incomes from Ireland, lived in England, or abroad, and who did not, perhaps could not, afford to employ agents to reside on and look after their properties in the manner which the larger landed proprietors, who felt their responsibility more strongly, were enabled to do. But, whatever might be thought by the political economist, those who knew Ireland, knew the important effect which absenteeism had upon all the relations of society in that country. He suspected its practical effect would be seen and known, on reference to the present visitation, and in the effects that were making to save the people from starvation. Then there was the evil of absentee agents—he meant agents whose only business it was to collect the rents—an evil seriously felt, and bearing immediately upon the condition of the people in the more remote parts of Ireland. There were several matters also connected with property in land in Ireland which required consideration: there was the delicate subject of incumbrances, alluded to by the hon. Member for Bath. The landed proprietors were, no doubt, heavily incumbered by family charges, and otherwise. The gross rental of Ireland being about 12,000,000*l.*, the available means of the landlords was estimated by the Poor Inquiry Commissioners at about 6,000,000*l.* There was a return made to the Land Commissioners on this subject, which afforded a fearful proof of the extent of Irish incumbrances, and their effects. It would be found in the appendix, Nos. 98 and 99. It appeared from these returns, that on an average of three years, property to the extent of 702,000*l.* a year was under receivers in Chancery and Exchequer; that the arrears had increased from 83,400*l.* to no less a sum than 400,000*l.*; and that there had been spent in costs annually more than 30,000*l.* While this, of course, indicated strongly the position of property in Ireland as regarded incumbrances, it indicated also, he thought, no inconsiderable mismanagement in the conduct of estates under those courts. There were other peculiarities affecting the owners of land, to which he would very briefly allude. The House had heard a good deal on the subject of extensive tracts being the property of individuals, and of the expediency of allowing portions to be sold. In that he fully concurred; but there was a peculiarity affecting property in Ireland under this head, which had not yet been noticed. In England, every one knew that if the owner of an estate had occasion to borrow money, he gave a mortgage of a particular farm or township: the mortgage affected that part of his property alone, leaving the remainder free. In Ireland, the practice was different. There, if the owner of an estate borrowed money, he almost invariably gave his bond as a security, with a judgment which overrode the whole of the property, however extensive, rendering it impossible for him to disencumber himself by selling off a portion of such property. He would not weary the House by adverting to the admitted evils of middlemen and subdivision of land, and to the circumstance which had been alluded to, "that in Ireland every man seemed out of his proper position." If he adverted to these topics at all, it was because he believed—and it could not be denied—that these things had all a direct bearing upon the condition of the people, and ought to be carefully kept in view in any legislation respecting Ireland. The hon. and learned Gentleman the Member for Bath had stated, and strongly, that all the social evils of Ireland were attributable to the landlords, who, he said, he thought ought to be swept off the face of the earth. He (Mr. Hamilton) would not deny that in times past the landed gentry of Ireland might have been careless and improvident; but he must take upon himself to say, that during the last twenty or thirty years there had been a marked and general improvement in the habits, opinions, and conduct of that class. He believed that there was now among them a great spirit and desire to improve their properties, with much foresight and careful anxiety to economise; and if the remarks of the hon. Member were intended to apply to the existing race of landlords, he would be glad to know from the hon. and learned Member precisely what part of their conduct he thought so blameable. The hon. and learned Member had deprecated very strongly the small holdings into which the country was divided. He (Mr. Hamilton) wished to know whether it was for "not clearing" their estates and consolidating the farms that the hon. Member so severely blamed the landlords? They had also heard much of the hardship and cruelty of what was called the clearance system; it had been frequently adverted to in the House. Now, he wished to know whether it was "for clearing" or "for not clearing" their estates that the Irish landlords had fallen under the animadversions of the hon. and learned Member? For his own part, no man could condemn more strongly than he (Mr. Hamilton) did, the injudicious application of that system to the population of Ireland, circumstanced as they were; and if the landlords were to be charged with a dereliction of duty, he would much rather they should deserve the censure of allowing the population to become excessive, than of applying the clearance system harshly and injudiciously. The hon. and learned Gentleman had also charged the gentry of Ireland that they were all out of their proper positions—occupying stations without the means of discharging the irduties. Possibly this might be the case to a certain extent; but did the blame of this rest entirely upon the gentry of Ireland? Was there nothing connected with legislation in this? He was himself an advocate for the maintenance of the Union; but he could not conceal from himself that it was the Union which withdrew from Ireland so many of those whose means and station would have enabled them to have discharged the duties of a landed aristocracy, and that in their absence their places were filled by others of inferior and inadequate means. No; Englishmen were proverbially just; and he was sorry to hear so much of unjust vituperation from some hon. Members connected with England. If Irishmen or Irish landlords were to blame, they might in their turn retort upon English legislation; they might tell them, "You have made Ireland subservient to your own political purposes—you have used her when it suited your own objects to do so—you have neglected her when you had no political object to gain by attending to her. How many political battles have you fought? How often have you made Ireland the arena for your own political struggles—to displace one Ministry, to substitute another? How many warnings have you received, that, while you were doing this, you were neglecting her real interests? Committee after committee, commission after commission, have supplied you most abundantly with information and advice. Where are the fruits of them? You are now reaping the fruits of neglecting them. In 1836, you received a report, framed almost entirely by Irishmen, on the subject of the poor—framed after long inquiry—containing also very valuable suggestions for their amelioration. The labours of that Committee are overthrown; you send over an Englishman—six weeks are thought sufficient to enable him to form a system, which you now think inadequate and insufficient." But whether it were the landlords, or whether it were the Legislature that was to blame, for the social disorganization and poverty of Ireland, these, as appeared to him, were but the remote causes. The immediate and proximate cause was, the great disproportion which existed between the quantity of labour as compared with the quantity of capital in that country—the quantity of labour being excessive, the amount of capital deficient; and he thought there was scarcely one of the evils he had enumerated which might not be attributed, either immediately or remotely, to that consideration. What, for example, led to the avidity for land, which in its turn led to the subdivision, and to the agrarian outrages? Why, the circumstances of the people, they being unable to procure employment as independent labourers paid in money. What led to the conacre system, which in its turn had greatly aggravated the destitution of the people at the present moment? Why, the same cause—the want of capital among the farmers to pay the labourer in money. He need scarcely remark how greatly that destitution had been increased by the diminution of the capital of the country by the loss of the potato crop. The remedy, in fact the only permanent remedy, for this evil, would appear to be, to absorb the surplus labour by the introduction of additional capital; such capital to be employed productively in increasing the permanent wealth of the country, as contradistinguished from the kind of employment which it had been found necessary to give during the last few months. With regard to the permanent measures announced by the noble Lord, he felt bound to state, that as they appeared to be founded upon that very principle of introducing capital into Ireland, to increase its permanent wealth, they had his cordial approval. To a part of one of those measures he had, however, a strong objection. He alluded to the clauses in the Poor Law Amendment Bill, by which it was proposed to give out-door relief to the able-bodied in certain cases. The House would do him injustice if they were to suppose that because he himself belonged to the class of landlords, in entertaining and expressing his objections, he was actuated by the feelings, or what might be considered the interests, of the landlord class alone. He sincerely believed it was for the interest of all classes in Ireland that out-door relief should not be given to the able-bodied as a part of the poor-law system. For his own part he would not object to any sacrifice that could be made, even although it might involve what would be considered the confiscation of a large part of the property of Ireland, provided he felt persuaded that such sacrifice could really conduce to the social improvement of the people. His objection to that part of the plan of the noble Lord was grounded upon the effect which even the expectation of out-door relief was calculated to produce on the minds of the people themselves. He must, however, confess, that the explanation given by the Chancellor of the Exchequer last night—namely, that in no case was the "poor-house test" to be dispensed with, where it was possible to apply it, had, to a certain extent, diminished his objections. At the same time, he did think that if it should be necessary to make a provision by law for the support of the able-bodied poor, in extreme cases, it would be better if such provision were not made a part of the poor-law system; but that it should only be administered under the authority of an Order in Council, by the Lord Lieutenant, after proper inquiry, and by some machinery not immediately connected with the poor-law system, or under the control of the Poor Law Commissioners, for he greatly feared that the effect of any provision for out-door relief to the able-bodied, as a part of the poor-law system, would lead to expectations among that class which would tend very materially to prevent the increase of those habits of industry which it was so essential to encourage by every means among the labourers of Ireland. He was sorry the plan of the noble Lord did not in any way include emigration. He would be the last to force emigration in any way, but he thought where families in Ireland had friends in Canada, or the States, and were themselves anxious to emigrate, but were deprived, through this visitation, of the means of doing so, some aid might have been given to enable them to carry their wishes into effect. He could not sufficiently impress upon the House his strong conviction that the improvement of Ireland was to be effected not so much by what might be called "great measures," as by a series of what might be considered small measures. There were a great many minor matters; things which might, perhaps, be thought unimportant in that House, but which bore hardly upon the poor in Ireland, and by remedying which the habits of the people might be improved and their energies stimulated; and by attention to which, on the part of the Legislature and the Government, great advantages might be gained for the country. He was glad to hear from the Chancellor of the Exchequer that it would be competent for the relief committees to assist with food the small farmers and labourers while employed in cultivating the land during the present famine. He was of opinion that this mode of relief would tend much to induce the labourers on the public works to resume their usual employment. There was one other point which he had omitted, respecting which he would say a few words. The hon. Member for Wycombe, who had opened the debate, had spoken of the necessity of revising the law of property in Ireland. He (Mr. Hamilton) concurred in that opinion; and although he ought to be the last man to suggest another commission, yet he could not help saying, that a commission of able lawyers for the purpose of considering how far the laws of real property, and indeed the laws generally, might be assimilated between the two countries, would be extremely useful. There was only one other topic to which he would advert. The hon. Gentleman the Member for Montrose had stated last night, with regard to the meeting of noblemen and gentlemen held recently in Dublin, that it was a meeting of landlords, who had met, not for the good of the people, but to secure for themselves as much as they could. Now, he must ask that hon. Member to read the resolutions of that meeting, and the measures suggested, and he would appeal to him in candour to say whether he could accuse that meeting justly with having no desire to benefit the people, but being anxious only for their own interests. His hon. Friend opposite, the Member for the Univeasity of Oxford, at an earlier period of the Session, had designated that meeting as the "United Irishmen." He was quite sure his hon. Friend had meant nothing offensive by the appellation, and he (Mr. Hamilton) did not complain of it. Nothing, he thought, could possibly prove more strongly the extreme peril of the country than the fact, that men who differed materially from each other on important points had been led to unite, laying aside their political differences by a sense of common danger, and by feelings of common humanity they were united; but they were united, not to create but to prevent a social revolution—not to involve the country in anarchy and confusion, but to raise the social and moral condition of the people, and to save all classes from the ruin with which they were threatened. They were united not to exercise, or to attempt to exercise, any undue influence, by confederation, but to secure, as far as they could, a due attention to the interests of Ireland; and he could assure his hon. Friend that the union among so many Irish gentlemen of different opinions was but a faint indication, on reflection, of the unity of feeling and purpose which the calamity had brought about among all classes of the community in Ireland. This heavy affliction, this great visitation from the Almighty, had softened men's feelings, and called forth the holier and better impulses of humanity. It was delightful to see on every relief committee men whose early associations, whose deep prejudices, whose stern convictions, had heretofore estranged them from each other, laying aside their prejudices, and, for the present, their conscientious differences, and cooperating together with generous emulation in relieving the distresses of their suffering fellow-creatures. It was delightful to see their prejudices subsiding—their animosities dissipating—and the foundation laid for harmony and concord, which, he trusted, would long survive the occasion which had called those feelings forth. He agreed fully with the Chancellor of the Exchequer, and the Secretary for Ireland, that Irish co-operation—the active and energetic exertions of the Irish themselves —were indispensable to the success of any measures that might be enacted. He could undertake, on behalf of the "United Irishmen," that whatever measures might be proposed, no matter by whom, should receive their most anxious attention; and, as far as they might be calculated to benefit Ireland, their active support. He could promise him that they would be received and dealt with without the slightest feeling of party; and he would be himself the first to congratulate the Ministry, if their measures should appear calculated to alleviate the present distress, and to conduce to the permanent benefit of Ireland.

Mr. J. O'CONNELL said, that it was not his intention to occupy much of the time of the House during the present debate, and simply for this reason, that whilst they were debating and delaying the progress of the Government measures, the people of Ireland were perishing by thousands. With the utmost haste which the House could make in passing the measures before them, they could not hope to catch in life the numbers who were perishing in Ireland. He did not make that statement with any desire at all to prevent hon. Members from discussing the difficult subjects involved in the Bills before the House. It was necessary that they should be discussed, and all he implored was, that the House should, as much as possible, endeavour to hasten the debate, and enable the Government to carry into effect the measures which they had brought forward on their responsibility, and which, after the fullest deliberation, they thought would be efficient to prevent the people of Ireland from being swept off the land during the approaching months. During the debate on the question, three characteristics had come strongly out, with respect to which he would venture to offer a few remarks. In the first place, he was bound to bear testimony to the general sympathy displayed for the distresses of Ireland. It gave him pleasure to bear testimony to the readiness shown on both sides of the House to adopt any—even the strongest—measures, which appeared to afford a chance of giving relief to the people. The next characteristic of the discussion was, that hon. Members generally displayed a degree of ignorance of the social state of Ireland, for which, even after fourteen or fifteen years' experience in that House, he was not quite prepared, and which impressed him still more strongly with the conviction—he would not do more than make this passing allusion to the topic—that no Parliament except a Parliament resident in the country was at all competent to protect the interests of, or to make laws useful and beneficial to, that country. The third characteristic of the debate, did not, he was glad to state, prevail so generally as the two already noticed —it was the aspersions and the attacks made upon various classes in Ireland. One hon. Member had made himself unenviably prominent in the use of those aspersions. It fortunately happened that anything which proceeded from that hon. Member had exceedingly little weight in the House, and still less in Ireland. He spoke of the hon. and learned Member for Bath, who—when almost every other Gentleman in the House was anxious to banish every topic of an irritating nature, to dismiss all prejudices, to discard every bad passion, and to be influenced only by considerations of humanity—rendered himself prominent in making every malignant attack calculated to arouse angry feelings, and prevent the House from coming to a calm consideration of the measures before them. The hon. and learned Member commenced and ended his speech last night with an attack on the Irish people; whilst there ran through it an attack upon the Irish priesthood, which was the more ungenerous at this moment, when the Catholic priesthood were sacrificing their lives by visiting the cots of the people, where febrile infection was raging, and doing everything in their power to afford them relief and consolation in their affliction. The hon. and learned Member presumed to say that the Catholic priesthood had an interest in the continuance of distress. ["No!"] He understood the hon. Member to make that declaration; but if he had mistaken him he would be ready at once to retract any comments upon the subject. The hon. and learned Member, if he did not misunderstand him, expressed his belief that the Catholic priesthood had an interest in wishing that the people of Ireland should continue in their present wretched state. The Catholic clergy needed not his vindication; their own conduct, admirable at all times, but more particularly during the present lamentable crisis, was far beyond any vindication which he could offer, and should cover with shame the man who had dared to assail them. As was natural, the hon. and learned Gentleman had also attacked the people of Ireland, and he said they approached that House in the "abject position of beggars." Now, he utterly denied that they presented themselves in any such humiliating position before Parliament. The people of Ireland did not deserve that such expressions should be used with regard to them. Here he could not help referring to the speech of the hon. Baronet the Member for Oxford University (Sir R. H. Inglis)—a speech which did credit to the hon. Baronet's head and heart—in which were detailed instances of heroic resignation under unexampled sufferings, which ought to have saved those who exhibited such qualities from foul aspersion. He admitted at once that the Irish Members had not adopted the tone which they might have adopted. At another time he should be disposed to show that it was by the legislation carried on in this Imperial Parliament that Ireland had been impoverished; that it was by such legislation they had been robbed of an amount of income which was far greater than any sums which might be granted for the alleviation of the present distress, large as those sums might be; and this could be easily shown when a fair account was struck between the countries. These were topics which at another time he should be tempted to urge in answer to such aspersions as those of the hon. and learned Gentleman; and those topics he might yet bring forward if the hon. and learned Gentleman persevered with the Motion of which he had given notice. That Motion would have been, no doubt, designated as absurd if it had originated with an Irish Member, for it was a proposal to transfer the income tax to Ireland, at a time when their incomes were wasted away by a taxation necessary to prevent the people from starving. The hon. and learned Gentleman had attacked, also, the landlords of Ireland. He was not there to deny that they had committed many and grave faults; but he was there to say that if they did, that House was not free from the blame which attached to their conduct. That House had encouraged the landlords in their misdeeds. It had put temptations in their way which it was beyond the average power of human nature to resist. Their legislation of forty-six years had so tended to impoverish Ireland, and to deprive her of all manufactures, that the people were driven for support to the land alone. That led to undue competition for land, which in its turn held out too strong a temptation to the landlords, to whom, in addition, more power was given over the disposal of their land than in England. The House in these things had furnished occasion for the sins of the landlord, and it was hardly fair now to turn round on those who were the instruments for carrying into operation the system of legislation adopted by this country. In the present distress he was bound to bear his testimony to the fact that the landlords had acted their part nobly. Throughout the country there were, of course, instances of individual neglect; but he would be bold to say (without looking for any parallel, for in no country and in no time could such a state of things as that now exhibited in Ireland be found), that considering that this calamity came suddenly upon them, and that they had so little time for looking out for proper measures of relief, the landlords had acted fully as well as the poor people had borne their part. He was bound also to bear his testimony, in corroboration of the excellent, instructive, and useful speech which had just been delivered by the hon. Member for the University of Dublin, to the delightful, but unfortunately most novel, feature in Irish proceedings, namely, the desire to forget the miserable differences which divided men heretofore, and to unite for the alleviation of the present calamity. As chairman of a board near Dublin, he was delighted beyond measure to find that there was no trace to be found in their proceedings of those political combats which had been, unfortunately, so common, and that the only contention was, as to who could best show their anxiety to relieve the people, and their readiness to make personal sacrifices for them. And he felt further bound to observe, that between the clergymen of all denominations, there was the most cordial unity of brotherhood in the cause of charity, and the strongest efforts were made to outdo each other in carrying out measures of relief. This was one shining light amid the darkness of their present condition. He only hoped it would be permanent, and that henceforward instead of being distracted by miserable divisions which paralysed their energies, the people would work together as a nation ought, to relieve themselves from the present distress, and to secure themselves against the recurrence of such a calamity. He should now say a few words on the measures of the Government. He was bound to say, however unpopular the opinion might be in that House, that in his opinion the Government had committed a great mistake in not having endeavoured to establish a greater number of depôts throughout the country. He did not say, of course, that the Government should supply the whole people of Ireland, but he thought that soup-kitchens, which they were now about to establish, ought at an earlier period to have been more generally established through Ireland. He was quite aware of the dangers of interference with trade, and of the rise of price which would be consequent on the Government going into the market as a purchaser; but he still thought, at every hazard, the Governmont ought to have obtained a larger supply of food than was furnished to the people. The Government ought to have encouraged the merchants to import on the condition that the food which they brought in should be immediately purchased by the Government. There was an old proverb which the Government should have borne in mind, "that the first loss was always the best." The loss consequent on the Government interference might have been many millions; but he doubted whether it would be found less in the end than the charges which they had incurred. No one in that House could calculate the expense likely to be cast on the country by the present distress. Had food been given to the people in the first instance—had their minds been set at ease as to the power of purchasing food at a reasonable rate—the people would have accepted employment from the landlords, and not gone on the public works. But he was bound at the same time to say, in justification of the Government, that had they proposed to take last autumn the step which he now recommended, they would not have been supported by that House, or by the great parties in this country. If the principles of political economy prevented the Government from importing food, they should have repealed, long since, the 4*s.* duty, and abolished the navigation laws; for these were as much opposed to the principles of political economy as the purchase of food by the Government. As to the future measures, the best thing which could be said as to that relating to soup was, that it had the general assent of the House. He only hoped it would be at once carried into operation. If it were not, the desolation that must occur in Ireland would be fearful. The accounts which the Irish Members received every day of the accumulating wretchedness was most distracting. He wished to impress it on the House, or on the Government, that not a single instant was to be lost in adopting every possible means for giving food to the people. If they acted otherwise, the deaths would soon be counted not by thousands, but by hundreds of thousands. If the reclamation of waste lands was extensively adopted, no doubt it would be of service in alleviating the distress of the country; but with respect to emigration, he feared it was not to be depended on as a measure of relief. He could not pass from the review of the plans of Government without one word as to the extension of the poor law to Ireland. He had spoken on the subject in that House and elsewhere in opposition to the measure, and he would, therefore, make but one remark—that, opposed as he was to the extension, or even the existence of any poor law in Ireland—convinced as he was by careful and attentive reading of the history of the poor law in England, of its evil effects, and of its entire failure for purposes of good—deeply convinced as he was of its efficiency for evil—persuaded of its demoralizing effects on the people, and of its bad tendencies in absorbing capital—and, above all, entirely satisfied that the evils it had gradually created in England would come on Ireland at once, and that all the intended limitations and restrictions by which Government sought to fence this measure about would be found inefficient in practice, and that the capital of this country would be entirely absorbed—still he was bound to say he would no more think of opposing the passing of this poor law under the present circumstances of Ireland, than he would think, were he in a sinking ship, of opposing the construction of a raft out of her spars and timbers. It was a desperate case, but it would not have occurred if Ireland had been governed by her own Parliament. No change of policy could meet the instant misery of the country. They must adopt any expedient to save the people even for a few months, or to preserve a few lives; and he grasped at this measure, not as a remedy for the distress, but as a means of saving a small portion of the population for a short time, though its adoption would be attended with pernicious consequences hereafter. On these grounds he withdrew all opposition which he would have offered, however ineffectually, under other circumstances and at another time. Before he sat down he had to observe that a very general remark had been made as to the want of comprehensiveness in the measures of Government. The reason that want was observed in all such measures was, because the House would not consider what the large majority of the people of Ireland looked on as a panacea for all her evils—he meant the repeal of the Union. The very mention of it was now laughed at by the House; but he believed it would be forced on their consideration by the evils of the country, and that it did contain in itself a panacea for them all. That measure would, as he believed, restore her to prosperity, increase her revenues, make her the ally and assistant, instead of a drag and thorn to England, and prevent the recurrence of such a calamity as that which they were now endeavouring to meet in vain. In conclusion, he would implore the House, that whatever they meant to do should be done immediately; and that they would not allow any more of those unjust, unkind, and inhuman aspersions and attacks on the unfortunate people of Ireland, which could only exasperate the people, and impede the cool and calm discussion that could give them a hope or chance of getting through their present calamity.

Viscount CASTLEREAGH wished to express the admiration he felt at the speeches which had been just delivered by Gentlemen differing so absolutely and completely as the hon. Member for the University of Dublin and the hon. Member for Kilkenny, and yet agreeing in the absence of party feeling or violence. He was sure the House would not fail to remark that the hon. Gentleman who had last spoken had set an example of moderation, by confessing his strong opinions on the poor law, and at the same time throwing them aside for the benefit of the country. It was not his intention to take up the time of the House, but, connected as he was with Ireland, he felt called on to take that opportunity of tendering his respectful and hearty praise to the noble Lord at the head of Her Majesty's Government for the measures he had proposed for that country. He must say the noble Lord had intrepidly come forward to meet censure from quarters whence he might have expected a milder verdict, and where criticism should have been silent. He had been extremely gratified to observe that the Motion of the hon. Member for Coventry did not meet with a seconder. He hoped the measures of the noble Lord would go to Ireland in their integrity; that no "cold shade" would be cast over them; and that whatever opposition they might meet with would pass away without a division. Fully sensible as he was of the great difficulties Government had to encounter in Ireland, he could not but say that no person could have felt more anxious, or no man have been more active in the discharge of his duties, than the Lord Lieutenant. He took that opportunity of stating how glad he was that the Government had appointed a resident proprietor so popular in his own country and in England to that office. He was glad that Irish blood had been infused into the Cabinet, and was sure the Government would inspire greater confidence among the people of Ireland in consequence. Many insinuations had been thrown out against the landlords of Ireland—it was unfortunate that Gentlemen on both sides of the House got up and made general statements as to these landlords; but he had never yet heard any very strong, well-supported accusations against them. He should be glad if hon. Members making those statements would let the House know who those people were; or who were the men who allowed their tenants to starve. Who, for instance, was the unknown proprietor at Skibbereen? You might go over broad England and find out the proprietor of any part of it in a moment; but the case was not so in Ireland. There were thousands of acres where it would be difficult to find out the owners, and whose inhabitants had never seen the proprietor, or any one connected with him, but some agent who came down from year to year to receive the rents, and remit them perhaps to London or Paris. He was sorry the Chancellor of the Exchequer had not laid greater stress on the part for reclaiming waste lands, as he was disposed to think it would be a profitable investment for the million they proposed to give, while it afforded employment to the people, and would act as a security to property at large. He would beg of the noble Lord to take care the holdings were not made too small, as this would be a great evil. With respect to absenteeism, all he could say was, that if the noble Lord or any other Minister proposed to tax absentees, he would be the first person to support it. Hs hoped, however, the proceeds of the tax would be spent or laid out in Ireland. As to the poor law, he entirely agreed with the hon. Member who spoke last, and the plan of giving food to the able-bodied poor appeared to him to be attended with great difficulty. He thought it possible to relieve the destitute labourer by giving him task-work; but he objected to a compulsory system of relief, without exacting from the able-bodied some labour in return. The effect of the public works had been to take the labourers from the ordinary agricultural operations of the country; and he knew of an instance where three labourers were employed in draining by piece-work at the usual wages, and who at their own urgent request left their work after two days only, and never returned. He hoped these evils would now cease, and a better state of things exist in future.

MR. C. LAWLESS said, that having had a seat in that House so very recently, he would not have risen, but that he felt himself called on to express his sentiments as representative of one of the most important constituencies in Ireland. It appeared from the preamble, that the Act 9 and 10 Vic., c. 107, was passed only in apprehension of a failure in the potato crop, and that, therefore, it was not a measure for the present exigency. Now, he believed that, from the passing of that Act till the end of January, when famine had set in, and thousands had perished and were perishing, no steps had been taken to meet the actual failure of the crop. More in sorrow than in anger he declared it to be his opinion, that all the measures which the House were now passing were six months too late. For many of them he was thankful. It was better to have them at the eleventh, or even at the twelfth hour, than not at all; but he could not help saying that, if the use of corn in distillation and brewing had been prohibited twelve months ago, and foreign grain admitted free, a great saving would have been effected. Why had not the ports been opened long ago? The effect of the present measures with regard to distillation at that moment, would be to ruin the last manufacture of Ireland. It was quite impossible Ireland could continue in her present condition; but, for good or evil, her fate was linked with that of England, and whether she was swept out of the scale of nations altogether, or elevated to her proper position, in her rise or fall this country must participate. The hon. Member for Bath declared she was the curse of England; but giving that hon. Gentleman credit for the wisest abstract philosophy, he did not think his conduct was calculated to turn that bane into a blessing. It was most un-English conduct, at all events; but he trusted there were not many men capable of similar acts, and ready to revile a people whom they were at the same time assisting. He would recommend Gentlemen who entertained such views to make a short stay in Ireland, and they would return—if not better informed as to the state of the country—at least with softened feelings towards the people and the country.

Mr. GREGORY, before he came to the discussion of the measures of Her Majesty's Government, would refer to the pledge given on a former occasion by the noble Lord, that he would not interfere with private enterprise. He was not one of those who felt an extraordinary hostility to the science of political economy; but he thought an error equally grave had been committed by those who thought the principles of that science were fixed and immutable. If ever an occasion had arisen when those principles might have been relaxed, it was during the last winter. He could not describe that occasion in any terms more forcible than those used by a right hon. Gentleman in that House in August last: "All argument drawn from the ordinary state of things is thrown away when applied to such a question; all the maxims of political prudence must give way before such a pressing necessity." The right hon. Gentleman who used that language was the present Secretary for Ireland. He recognised the necessity of encouraging a retail trade in Ireland. 1846 and 1847 would not be the last years in which they would have to depend on foreign countries for subsistence; and, above all, he saw how utterly impossible it was for any Government to become the feeder of 4,000,000 of people. He, therefore, concurred with the noble Lord in the views he took on the subject; but what he did blame in the noble Lord was the nature of the pledge he had made to the speculators and dealers; he said, under no circumstances whatever would he interfere with the importation of corn from abroad. Now, the noble Lord must know that, in the most remote parts of Ireland, those most stricken by this terrible calamity were utterly deprived of the benefit of private enterprise. The want of capital, of knowledge, and security, banished it to more congenial spots. There had then been a clear necessity for Government interference. Was there no middle course for the noble Lord to pursue? Would it not have been possible for the noble Lord to have said to those merchants and speculators, "I will not now interfere with your operations; but if I find that those operations fail, or that your profits, in some localities, become so exorbitant that the people cannot buy food, then, under those circumstances, all considerations shall give way, and so far will we become your competitors, that we will take care, so far as we can prevent it, that no human being shall perish through starvation." He was convinced that, had the Government adopted this course, they would have checked undue speculation, and have taken the best means to feed the people. He had heard with pleasure the speech, on a previous evening, of the noble Lord the Member for Lynn, and with equal pleasure had read the speech of another noble Lord, a distinguished member of the same party, in another place; and though he did not agree with the noble Lord (Lord G. Bentinck) as to the necessity of abandoning all economic reservations, or as to the proper treatment of speculators and regrators, he nevertheless did thank his noble Friend for the declaration of his opinion that, so far as Government means went, the people of Ireland should be saved from starvation. He trusted that the noble Lord would endeavour to give effect to that declaration; and if the noble Lord should consider it requisite to resist the Government measures, as not conducive to this end, he would be able to look back to his first act of opposition this Session without any regret. It was evident that the enormous price of provisions in Ireland had not been so much the consequence, either of the greatness of demand, or of the deficiency of supply, as to the greatness of the derivative profits—each of them enormous. It was also clear, in many districts where death had ensued, that that result must be ascribed to the difficulty which had been experienced in the purchase of food. The insecurity of conveyance, the dilatory proceedings, and the absence of stock and capital in those districts, had prevented the proper steps being taken to obtain provisions from the neighbouring markets. The right hon. Gentleman the Chancellor of the Exchequer had, the other evening, made a statement, which had since been contradicted by the hon. Member for Donegal, that the food stores had been open all the winter. He could assure the right hon. Gentleman that his own experience in the country enabled him to say, that on many late occasions, in many places, the greatest difficulty had been found in procuring food; and in one locality in Galway, so much had this been the case, that until Thursday last he had not had the slightest idea that a pound had been issued from the Commissariat Department. He had received a few days since a letter from a place on the coast in Galway, informing him that "starvation had really commenced;" that "they were dropping down in dozens;" that "on the sea coast they were compelled to feed on mussels, thus causing dysentery and death;" that "the poor were being thrown off unfinished works;" that "there was not one pound of Indian meal in Galway last Friday;" that "they would not open the Government depôts, although 1,000 tons were therein;" and, in the face of such a document as this, the right hon. Gentleman must renounce the statement that the stores had been opened throughout the year, and that there had been no neglect of the requisite precautions. But the inquiry and the examination should have been made beforehand; the time had now almost passed by. If the necessity was strong now for these stores to be opened—now, when the new American maize crop was expected, and when prices had fallen—how much greater was the necessity three months ago, when Indian meal had been selling at 18*l.* or 20*l.* per ton! It was not until within a few days before the meeting of Parliament, and when hundreds were already dead, that soup-kitchens had been established. It was found that the Labour-rate Act had demoralized the whole country, and a letter from the Lord Lieutenant had been issued, which it had been impossible to make use of. Then came the Treasury Minute, which ought to have come long before; and, last of all, Bills were brought before Parliament for the suspension of the navigation laws, and of the 4*s.* duty, when the benefit that could be derived from the first measure was as nothing, and when the repeal of the duty would only tend to impoverish the Exchequer, and increase the gains of the speculator and holder of corn in bond. He made every allowance for the difficulties with which Her Majesty's Government had had to contend; and he could himself bear testimony to the unceasing exertions of the right hon. Gentleman (Mr. Labouchere), and to the indefatigable efforts of the Lord Lieutenant; but, at the same time, while giving them the credit of good intentions, he would say, that if they called upon him to grant them the praise due to far-seeing and sagacious statesmen, struggling with adverse circumstances, he must be permitted to answer, that in their past actions, he had not beheld that sight which was declared to be a sight worthy of the gods. The Labour-rate Act had been a great failure; it had resulted in great evils; it had produced a total divergence of labour from its natural channels; the soil had been neglected; and their position now was, that their prospects for 1848 were more deplorable than their anticipations had been of 1846 and 1847. Above all, the operation of that Act was to give every discouragement to that class of the community in Ireland who had not merely exercised the rights, but had most worthily fulfilled all the duties of property. The efficiency of the Labour-rate Act depended as much on the cheapness of food, as effect did on cause; and they relied on the representation made last year by the right hon. Gentleman the Chancellor of the Exchequer, who stated that he had the authority of eminent merchants in saying that the prices of provisions would not be affected. He knew how difficult it was to rely upon any calculations of this nature; but still the Government had had the means in their power of securing accurate information, and such a measure should not have been adopted without a positive security that its effects would not be injurious. And it should not be forgotten that all these results were foretold and foreseen; and the language of remonstrance used at the time by Lord Monteagle seemed indeed to have been inspired by the spirit of prophecy. His Lordship said, when taking part in the debate on the Act in the other House, that if they desired to relieve the poor without encountering the evils of out-door relief, they must take as their groundwork the profitable employment of the people; that, if the measure passed, they would waste the capital of the country, uselessly expend the funds for the employment of labour, and adopt a principle so fatal to any country, and especially so fatal to Ireland, that their Lordships would look back to the pressure of that moment as far less objectionable than the evil which, by this measure, they would inflict on the population. His Lordship then further said, that he anticipated the Government were about to involve themselves in inconceivable difficulties; and another noble Peer, the Duke of Grafton, on the same occasion, remarked, that if it was intended to apply the funds to be created by that Act to the making of bridges and roads, it would be inevitable that the land must be altogether neglected. Now, these prophecies had proved true to the very letter. They had rejected the establishment of depôts on the principles of political economy — principles which he admitted must always demand consideration; but they had violated every rule and precept of that science by carrying a measure which had interfered with labour, and which had turned it from all its ordinary and necessary channels. It could be no satisfaction to the people of Ireland to know that the Government now admitted its error. When, early in the year, they saw what was impending—when they found how great was the pressure on the public works, the number of people improperly employed, which no vigilance on the part of relief committees could prevent—when they saw enormous sums of silver come into the country, and never reappear, they should immediately have substituted something in the place of their most faulty legislation. If they had not thought it advisable to call Parliament together, they should at once have substituted other means of employment; have come before the House as they now had done, for indemnity, which would have been most readily and gratefully conceded. He could not refuse giving credit to the noble Lord (Lord J. Russell) for those measures he had just introduced. He trusted, sincerely, that with some amendments and alterations those measures would be productive, not only of immediete relief, but of permanent benefit to Ireland. He regretted that the noble Lord had not brought forward some plan which should give assistance to railway companies in the employment of the people. Such works would be, in every sense of the word, productive; he believed, in fact, that railways would be a material element in the future prosperity of Ireland, and that, if the Government now decided in co-operating in this way with private enterprise, they would take the most effectual means to remedy the mischief caused by the Labour-rate Act. The noble Lord the Member for Lynn had, however, signified his intention to investigate this subject; and he earnestly hoped that some measure would be introduced in reference to this important item in their relief resources, so framed as to meet with the approbation of the House. He also regretted that the noble Lord the First Lord of the Treasury had not adverted to the subject of agricultural schools, for if ever there was a necessity for such institutions it was at this moment, when a better cultivation of the land was called for. The present race of farmers in Ireland were slow to improve, and unwilling to adopt the suggestions of their landlords; either from believing themselves to be not furnished with equal capabilities, or from suspicion of ulterior views on the part of those who recommended these improvements. The hon. Member for Kildare (Mr. R. Archbold), a gentleman practically conversant with the state of agriculture, had borne valuable testimony to the boon which such schools would prove to the cultivators of the soil in that country; and the application of 1,000,000*l.* to such a purpose would have been far more serviceable and more profitable to all parties, than if lavished, as proposed to be, in a futile speculation to reclaim irreclaimably waste lands. He hoped that the noble Lord, in offering encouragement to landowners to cultivate and improve their estates, would compel those who had, either from unwillingness or inability, neglected their duty, to avail themselves of the opportunity. The great principle on which an enlightened Legislature should proceed, should be to give encouragement to those who had made the best use of the advantages attached to their position, and, while imposing taxation on the lazy and improvident, to hold out every practical exemption to the man who was desirous of ameliorating the condition of the country. To give that effect to their legislation, a Government should endeavour to contract the circle of responsibility into its narrowest limits. The narrower the field of action in which every man was placed, and in which his responsibility rested, the more clearly would that man see his duty—the more would he benefit by a stimulus. When they spread the responsibility over a larger space, the weaker became the sense and the more indefinite the notions of duty: the easier for a man to devolve the duty on others, the less inducement did he possess to discharge it himself. They ought not to ride to death the willing horse. He thought a wise statesman would not, in such arduous times, throw the performance of duties on the willing and good alone. When they imposed taxation with one hand, they ought, with the other, to offer the means of avoiding that burden; and when they gave encouragement to the active and labouring, they should apply the spur, and that not lightly, to the lazy, the apathetic, and the improvident. They should, in short, teach every man that it was his interest to do his duty—and if he preferred to remain dilatory and supine, then he should be compelled to pay dearly for the indulgence of these tranquil pleasures. He did not think that the measures of the noble Lord were sufficiently stringent to secure the adoption of that principle; there was permission given to all to do their duty, but there was constraint upon no one. But he would not now enter into the details and particulars of the scheme of the Government. He would not now express any opinion upon the alterations in the poor law; he considered that subject should be dealt with separately. He did regret that the noble Lord had treated the subject of emigration so lightly; he did not wish for State interference to any very great extent, but it was in their power to afford facilities to emigrants, of which they were now in extreme need. Neither would he address himself to the attack made by the hon. and learned Member for Bath (Mr. Roebuck) upon the Irish landed proprietors. But statements had gone forth from more important quarters, and it had been attempted to fix on the landlords of Ireland the responsibility of all the social evils which afflicted that country. They had been called the most improvident and the most reckless aristocracy that the world had ever seen—a class for whose crimes confiscation would be the mildest remedy that could be inflicted—and that it ought to be inflicted if it were not inexpedient to do so. They had been accused of coming as supplicants and beggars to the Imperial Parliament for aid; but they had not come to the Imperial Parliament as beggars. The justice of the claims which they had made, was indeed acknowledged; and he must say, though he knew that what he said would be unpalatable to the House, that were it not for the absolute necessity of imposing immediate and peremptory taxation, to show the people of Ireland the necessity of hereafter avoiding, by exertion, the imposition of such burdens on themselves and others, in justice and in equity the whole of the money expended in unprofitable labour should be thrown on the resources of the United Kingdom. All the prosperity, he believed, which had fallen to the lot of England, might have been enjoyed by Ireland also, had the manufactures of that country not been destroyed by the acts of the English Government. In 1695, the tract of Molyneux, on the case of Ireland, in which he protested against the destruction of the Irish woollen manufacture, was ordered to be burnt by the hands of the common hangman. The wisest and ablest of English statesmen had constantly borne testimony to the effects of this narrow-minded policy. Just one hundred years after, in 1798, Mr. Pitt corroborated every word in the writings of Molyneux; Chief Justice Bushe also bore testimony to their truth; and in 1824 Mr. Huskisson also gave them the weight of his corroboration. Thus Pitt, Chief Justice Bushe, and Huskisson, all corroborated the works of Molyneux, which were condemned to be burnt by the hands of the common hangman; and they were therefore entitled to assume that, had justice been done to Irish manufactures, the prosperity now enjoyed by England might have been theirs also. He called upon the House to recollect that much of the evil experienced in Ireland at the present day was due to English legislation, not to the Irish landlords; and he also asked them to bear in mind that wherever, as in the north of Ireland, capital derived from manufactures was advancing in an equal ratio with the population, there they had industry and peace and contentment; while, if they looked to such districts as Dorsetshire, in the south of England, where no manufacturing capital existed, they saw evils springing up similar to those which existed in Ireland. It was easy to throw the charge of past misgovernment on a class. Formerly it was the custom to throw the blame of everything connected with Ireland upon the poor—every evil was ascribed to their indolence, their improvidence, and the Celtic nature of their character. Then it was thrown upon the griping exactions of the middlemen; and now it was thought right to impute all to an indolent class of unwilling landlords. It should be borne in mind, however, that the Irish landlords found themselves in a peculiar position, and that they were placed in circumstances in which no English proprietors were ever placed; in which he trusted they never would be placed. He would deeply regret the day when parity of circumstances would teach them to make allowances. At the same time, he would say that, in justice to themselves, as well as to England, and in return for the liberality of this country, they were bound to make every possible exertion, to strain every nerve, to prevent this country again from being burdened with taxation similar to that which was now imposed upon it. He hoped every man would do his duty, not only to prevent a return of the present misfortunes, but, if possible, to make them the prelude of better things. When the devils left the man, they rent him; but his wounds and weakness were the prelude of returning health. He trusted, then, that the present evils of Ireland would tend to the future good of that country. His advice was, give to every man in Ireland the field for exertion—give him the means of exertion—and hold out to him the rewards of exertion, and if any man failed to do his duty, then

> " ———Tunc agmine facto
> Ignavum fucos pecus à præsepibus arce."

SIR H. W. BARRON rejoiced to see the excellent feeling that had been displayed by almost every speaker that evening in reference to Ireland; but, above all, he begged to tender his congratulations to his hon. Friend the Member for Dublin, who had just sat down, for the manly, and, he would call it—he hoped without offence to any man—the Irish speech that he had delivered, and the Irish good sentiments that he had that evening displayed. He was not afraid to associate with such men as his hon. Friend for the good of his country; and long might they be "United Irishmen" in that, the proper sense of the term! He, for one, was most anxious to suppress every feeling which would keep asunder men of such high station, property, and intelligence as the hon. Member who had just sat down, when they gave expression to sentiments so worthy of themselves and the country to which they belonged. Hitherto they had been divided on many subjects, which common misfortune had now laid aside, and he hoped for ever. He hoped that the foundations were laid for a better state of things in Ireland. They had been hitherto disunited, and hitherto (he said it without offence) the British Legislature, or he should rather say the English Legislature, had dealt with Ireland on the old vicious principle of *divide et impera*. That principle, he trusted, had been cast away for ever, and that the good sense, the kindly feeling which had been manifested towards Ireland would be permanent. He was glad to find that the Motion of the hon. Member for Coventry (Mr. Williams) on the previous evening, did not meet with a seconder. That hon. Gentleman had asserted that Ireland paid 12,000,000*l*. less in proportion than England did to the national exchequer. Now, a more fallacious statement had never, he believed, been uttered in that House. If the hon. Gentleman would refer to the returns of last year, he would find that the difference in the amount paid by Ireland to the national treasury, was only half the sum he had named. The hon. Member supposed that Ireland paid no proportion of the income tax. Why, he saw hon. Gentlemen on all sides of the House who were Irish proprietors, and who paid the income tax in respect of their estates in Ireland. Was it not notorious that the majority of the Irish proprietors possessed residences in and near London, and throughout England, where they were of course compelled to pay the income tax? Was it not notorious that the great proportion of the mortgagees of Irish estates were London companies and London moneyed men, and that every one of those paid the income tax in respect of their Irish estates? Was it not notorious to every one who lived at Bath, Cheltenham, Brighton, and the different fashionable watering-places in England, that every one of the Irish gentlemen who resided there paid the income tax? He would now look to another branch of the revenue of this country, for which Ireland got no credit, he meant the customs' duties. Almost all the importations of tea into the United Kingdom entered the ports of London, Liverpool, or the other large ports of England. Every pound of tea consumed in Ireland paid a duty to the national treasury in England; and so with regard to other imported commodities, such as sugar, rum, brandy, &c. And now, when hon. Gentlemen talked in the strain indulged in by the hon. Member for Coventry, he (Sir H. W. Barron) wanted to know whether there really was a union between the two countries? Was there one exchequer for England, and another for Ireland? Was not the English exchequer the Irish exchequer? Was not the English Minister the Irish Minister? If the Irish Members had no right to come to that House and claim relief, when those whom they represented were afflicted with a famine, he would then say, "Give us our own exchequer, and let us have our own Parliament." There could be no alternative. If the English Members told them that they were beggars, forsooth, for English charity, they (the Irish Members) repudiated the term, and they would also repudiate the taxes which they were called upon to pay to the national treasury. The Irish Members contended that that treasury was as much the property of Ireland as it was of England. They had as just a right to make a claim upon that treasury as any Englishman, however high or proud he might fancy himself to be. Now, the Irish had a claim upon the national exchequer, or they had not. And if they had, all the vapouring, all the absurd nonsense about the English exchequer, fell to the ground; it was mere verbiage, and meant nothing except insult or ignorance, and perhaps the best way to meet it, would be by treating it with silent contempt. It must, however, be remembered that such language went out of the doors of the House, and was made use of *ad captandum vulgus* by popular agitators. Now, there was another most absurd assertion which had been made in several quarters, and that was to the effect that the Irish loans had never been repaid, and that they had become a by-word for making a present of money. Why, a more unfounded assertion than that had never been made, either in or out of that House; and in support of his statement, he would refer them to the returns which lay upon the Table of the House. He referred to the public documents of the country, and called upon the Gentlemen who had made those assertions to prove them. He denied that any loan which had been made to Ireland, for Irish purposes, had not been paid. The principal of those loans had been punctually paid—ay, and with usurious interest too. He said this upon deliberation. There certainly had been a million of money lent to the Irish clergy, which had not been repaid; but was that loan made for Irish purposes, or did the people ask for it? That was the only sum, he would say emphatically, because he had taken great pains to inquire into the matter, that he could discover had been lent to Ireland, for which England had not been repaid with usurious interest. It was well known that many loans which were made out of the national exchequer to English proprietors, only paid 4*l.* per cent interest; indeed the highest rate of interest paid for such loans was 4*l.* 10*s.*; but the lowest for the Irish loans was 5*l.* per cent; and not only had that 5*l.* per cent been paid, together with the whole of the sum advanced, but, as was proved by the officers of the British Government, another 5*l.* per cent had been realized to the national treasury in consequence of the increase in the consumption of exciseable goods in the districts which had been improved by those loans. He regretted, therefore, that such bad feeling had been displayed by Gentlemen that took upon themselves the liberty of dictating, forsooth, to the Irish Gentlemen in that House as to how they should manage their affairs. He had heard Gentlemen in that House who had never crossed the Channel, and that had not one acre of land in that country, that knew nothing either about the Irish calamity, or its soil, or anything else connected with Ireland, give long lectures to the Irish landlords. Now, notwithstanding the blame which had been cast upon the Irish landlords, and without the slightest fear of being contradicted by facts, he would take upon himself to say emphatically that the whole of the poverty and distress of Ireland was to be attributed to the gross ignorance with which England had legislated for that country. They had legislated for Ireland as if she were an enemy. They had legislated with the view of destroying her manufactures and every species of employment of which she was formerly possessed. They had done everything that was calculated to impoverish her, and now, in the language of the hon. Member for Bath (Mr. Roebuck), "the tyranny of England was recoiling upon herself." He (Sir H. W. Barron) took that as his motto; and he thought that he had reason for doing so. That language was justly grounded upon the historical facts of the last—he would not say two hundred years, as was stated by the hon. Member for Dublin (Mr. Gregory), but of the last—seven centuries. They had legislated for Ireland with the view of crushing her, and bringing her under English domination. When they saw her growing prosperous by her woollen trade, which bid fair to emulate their own woollen manufactures in the north of England, they enacted laws for the purpose of crushing it. No Act could be brought into the Irish Parliament, whether Lords or Commons, until first approved of by the British Minister in the city of London, whose dictum was a sort of law; and, indeed, the Acts of the English Minister had to be transmitted to Dublin to be registered there as deeds. The course which England had pursued to Ireland with regard to her Legislature, was but the adding of insult to injury. Never had there been a parallel to such mockery and cruelty. He granted that during the last thirty or forty years a wiser course had been adopted towards Ireland; that their eyes had been opened, not only with regard to the commerce of their own country, but they had also seen the wickedness and the folly of their conduct towards Ireland. Let them not taunt the Irish with being poor or ignorant. The English Government had made them what they were. They had legislated for a period of seven centuries with the view of making Ireland abject, poor, miserable, wretched, and impoverished. But "the tyranny of England was recoiling upon herself." They had degraded the Irish people, and they must now feel the consequences of their misgovernment. They had made the Irish people ignorant; they had made it a felony for a Catholic to keep a school in Ireland, and then they called them ignorant. They had enacted that to administer the sacred rites of religion was a felony; and they were now astonished that the people should be sunk in crime and in ignorance. He told them again, then, that England was chargeable with the ignorance and poverty of Ireland. They might regret it now. He believed that they did — he believed that they now saw the wickedness and the folly of their acts; but did they think that some ten, twenty, thirty, or forty years would suffice to undo the misgovernment of seven centuries? He would tell them in plain words that their misrule, their persecutions, and their bad government, had instilled into the minds of the people of Ireland the belief that England hated Ireland, and they in return detested British legislation. And was that wonderful? After centuries of misrule, was it surprising that they should see springing up above them the wicked effects of their harsh treatment? Much had been said in England as to the unfortunate state of his (Sir H. Barron's) country; and it was asserted that the people did not deserve even the charity of Englishmen. Every species of misrepresentation had been resorted to by the press of this country to depreciate the Irish. One means taken to prejudice the great and good and charitable people of England, as he acknowledged they were when not blinded by bigotry, was by representing that the charity and money sent from England were made an exceedingly bad use of, by being employed in buying fire-arms. A grosser misrepresentation, to his own knowledge, had never been made. What was the fact? Some persons in his own neighbourhood, and his own tenantry, came to him and his neighbours, and asked them, as magistrates, whether they had any objection to their getting guns or pistols to protect their haggards and barns? He of course answered, "It is your duty to do so; and I know, as respectable men, you will not make a bad use of them." He knew that arms in such hands were the safety of property; and he believed that not a single man amongst his own neighbours, of the class of labourers on public works, bought a single fire-arm during the winter. At a meeting of the relief committee at Skibbereen, on the 29th of December last, resolutions were come to that the statements with regard to the purchase of fire-arms were exaggerated, if not unfounded; that only fifteen guns and three pistols had been disposed of, which were purchased by men of the better classes, to provide themselves with means of defence against the labouring classes, should they be driven to desperation by want of food. This, however, was not the case. He had been chairman of two relief committees, and had witnessed the most appalling destitution; but, with that destitution, he felt it his duty to state to the House and to the charitable people of England, he never saw greater submission to the will of Providence. The only demand was for "work, work, or bread;" but there was no intimidation, no complaint. Greater submission could not be exhibited by any people in such circumstances; and he had reason to know that in three neighbouring counties the people were of a similar character. It was a gross libel upon the Irish people to speak of them as they had been spoken of in that House by some hon. Members; and as they had been written and spoken of out of it by many who ought to know and feel better. It was acknowledged that the failure of the potato crop was the cause of the distress which prevailed. He asked the House were the Irish landlords, or any other portion of the Irish people, the cause of that failure? With regard to the money which had been expended upon useless public works in Ireland—he might say, with an hon. Member behind him, those mischievous public works—he would ask the landlords of Ireland, and the farmers of Ireland, and the people of Ireland, "Have you been the authors, in any one sense of the word, of this great national calamity?" Was it not an awful visitation of Providence, which the landlords of Ireland could not prevent? and, if so, was it not to be met in the same manner as any other national calamity? When Quebec was partly burnt down, 20,000*l.* was paid out of the public treasury for the relief of that public calamity; and did any Member say, "Why should we pay this? let the people of Quebec pay it?" In the same Session, did we not pay to another colony 30,000*l.* on account of a similar calamity at St. John's, Newfoundland?—an insignificant distant colony. And did any Member of that House say, "Let Newfoundland tax itself and pay the money?" Where were the political economists at this time? Suppose London were to be burnt down, as it once was, by a visitation of Providence, would any Member get up and say, "It was not the duty of the Imperial Legislature to make a large and munificent grant for rebuilding it?" Would not five millions of money be well bestowed for such a purpose; and were they not equally bound to relieve and protect Dublin and Cork as London and Liverpool? and would they refuse to five millions of people in Ireland, in a state of destitution from the destruction of their crops, equal to 15,000,000*l.* if not 20,000,000*l.*, a grant of 5,000,000*l.* or 6,000,000*l.* or 7,000,000*l.* as an act of justice? He agreed with the hon. Member for Bath, that the law of real property ought to be improved in Ireland. Holders of entailed estates ought to be allowed to disencumber them of debt by the sale of portions: this would be one of the courses which would go to the root of the evil, and he was prepared to support Her Majesty's Ministers in any measure to effect that object. Another measure which Her Majesty's Ministers should bring forward was a Tenants' Compensation Act. Unless the tenants of Ireland were given strong inducements to lay out money in improving the land, by building and other permanent improvements, the Legislature would have only half done its duty. The tenants should have a security, that, if turned out of their land, they might require compensation from their landlord for the improvements they had made. He thought this might be managed without inconvenience; he saw no objection to the measure; and he thought no honest landlord would or ought to object to it. With respect to waste lands, he did not agree with the hon. Member for Kilkenny in condemning the Government, which ought not, however, to look to extremely large profits from the undertaking; it would be sufficient if they got the interest of the money laid out. His hon. Friend the Member for Wycombe seemed to think it all an ideal thing; but, if he had had more experience of the soil of Ireland, and of the facilities for improving waste lands in different counties, he was satisfied that his hon. Friend would be convinced that there could not be a more useful and beneficial measure than a judicious improvement of the waste lands of Ireland. With respect to the Poor Law Amendment Bill, he (Sir H. Barron) had stood nearly alone in that House, as an Irish Member, ten years ago, in supporting, or wishing the Government to bring forward, a poor law for Ireland. He had given great consideration to the matter, and had not the slightest doubt, after many years of experience, that nothing could be more beneficial to Ireland than a good poor law. But nothing could be done by a poor law without it brought home to every landlord the necessity for improving the land; and he would warn the Legislature, that, unless their proposition were carried out in a judicious manner, and brought into a narrow compass, and in a way which would make each landlord accountable for the poor on his own property, it would, in all probability, do an enormous mischief. Some proprietors might say, that making each landlord accountable for the poor on his land would amount to a forfeiture of their estates; but of those men he would ask this simple question—Was it not better that their estates should be forfeited than a most gross injustice be committed on those landlords who had been managing their estates judiciously? There was no estate, however small, that might not be improved by employing the people located on it; and he felt, that unless the proposed poor law for Ireland should have the effect of producing such employment, the Legislature would have enacted a poor law in vain, or have enacted a most mischievous Act. He would only allude to one subject more, and that was the subject of railways in Ireland. This, he hoped, Her Majesty's Government would take into their most serious consideration, recollecting, at the same time, that the present calamity in Ireland was but an exception. That the people should and ought to be employed could not be denied, and the best means of employing them was by means of railways; and, he would add, that unless some means were adopted for employing the people of Ireland, all the legislation of that House would be insufficient. He could not sit down without offering his tribute of thanks to the people of England, who had so nobly come forward to render aid to their fellow-countrymen in Ireland; and he could assure them, that their generosity would do more to conciliate the people of Ireland than any Acts of that House, or any other branch of the Legislature.

Mr. LEFROY would not follow, or attempt to follow, the hon. Baronet the Member for Waterford (Sir H. W. Barron) through the various subjects to which he had referred; but he must make one observation with reference to a matter to which the hon. Member had adverted. Surely the hon. Member could not consider that he (Mr. Lefroy), or those who sat with him, could agree with the hon. Member in the view he had taken of the Irish Church, nor could he expect that Englishmen would concur with him in thinking they had spent a large sum of money for merely nothing. Important as those matters were, when the proper time arrived for considering them, he begged to be permitted to say he thought the present exigencies of the country did require of them, that they should on this occasion confine themselves and their observations as shortly as possible to the subject before them. Surely no man could deny that the present time was the most important one that ever had occurred in the affairs of their country. Surely no man in this country, who had heard the simple eloquence of the explanation that had been given by the noble Lord who had introduced the Bills to the House, and his declaration with respect to the misery, the famine, and the pestilence that must ensue, if those measures were not adopted—no man who had been himself a witness of those miseries, who must not concur in thinking that much gratitude was due to Her Majesty's Government for such measures as were for present relief; and it was their duty to forward them by all means within their power. Amidst the pressure of circumstances which must afflict every Irishman, he felt one great satisfaction. He could congratulate his countrymen that however they had been pained by the observations that fell from three hon. Members on the other side of the House, he could say that within those three speeches were contained every proposition that had been urged to endeavour to defeat the kind intentions of Her Majesty's Government towards the people of Ireland. It had been proposed that the Irish poor law should have precedence of the other measure. So that after starvation had taken its course, and had destroyed thousands of their people, then that the Irish poor law should come to afford support to those who were remaining alive. What did the hon. Member for Montrose propose as the greatest panacea for the benefit of Ireland? He proposed that they should do away with the Lord Lieutenancy of Ireland, and effect a saving to the country of 20,000*l.* a year. He cared not for their retaining the office of Lord Lieutenant; but he (Mr. Lefroy) said, if ever there was a Lord Lieutenant who received that sum to the gratification of the Irish people, it was the Lord Lieutenant who now held that high office. With respect to the observations of the hon. Member for Bath; what had he said? He had protested in detail against every individual measure that Her Majesty's Government had propounded for the benefit of the country. He not only had entered that protest, but he had proceeded to state to them what he would propose for the benefit of Ireland. It included, as it appeared to him, but three things; one of which was the appropriation of church property to different purposes; and another was the sweeping away of entails. But all he could say with reference to them was, that they appeared to him to be very little worthy of a British senator or a British lawyer. With regard to the condition of Ireland, he was of opinion, that the creation of the 40*s.* freeholders had led to that over-population which caused much of the misery that now afflicted that country. With respect to the measures proposed by Her Majesty's Government, he certainly hoped that they were calculated to confer great and important benefits, though in Committee some amendments might be suggested, which he had no doubt Her Majesty's Government would take into their consideration. As to the Indemnity Bill, no man could doubt that Her Majesty's Government had come forward at a moment of difficulty to propose measures that at the time were necessary. He knew that various opinions were entertained as to the public works. He was not there to support Her Majesty's Government with respect to those works. He sincerely regretted that they were not enabled at the proper time to undertake more profitable works; but he would say this—that if the Government were in fault, there were others that were also in fault. If Her Majesty's Government would give the stimulant to exertion which they had now undertaken to do, he anticipated that the day would arrive when they would have their full reward for what they had done in the moral and social improvement of the people. It was said the landlords were coming as beggars to the Government; but that charge he denied. How could it be said that they were beggars, when the sum of money which was to be given to them at 3½ per cent, was to be fairly repaid? He would no longer occupy the time of the House than by entreating and imploring Her Majesty's Government to take into their immediate consideration the great pressure that was upon that country. They daily received accounts of the famine that pressed upon the people, and though he regretted Her Majesty's Government had not thought it consistent with their policy to provide supplies of corn to keep down the prices, yet he felt it was useless to refer to that point now, when they had adopted a useful course. He should sincerely rejoice if in the future exertions for Ireland he should see emigration and colonization promoted, for by that means their over-population (which the circumstances of the country prevented from being employed at home) would be provided for in a distant land.

VISCOUNT CLEMENTS was sorry to have heard the right hon. Gentleman the Chancellor of the Exchequer find fault with the gentry of Ireland, as he stated, for their remissness in attending to their duties on the relief committees. He apprehended that the right hon. Gentleman little knew the difficulties they had to encounter, and the different duties which devolved upon the gentry in many parts of Ireland. If he (Lord Clements) wanted an answer to that statement of the right hon. Gentleman, he thought he almost supplied it himself in the very following sentence he had addressed to the House, when he said—"I admit the absence of all local machinery in Ireland, which we possess in every parish in this country." That was the very sentence in which he had passed an opinion on the Irish gentry; and he (Lord Clements) would recommend Gentlemen, when they were inclined to find fault with others, to examine their own faults. He apprehended that if proper attention had been paid to the Public Works Bill of last Session—if it had been more studiously considered—if notice had even been given of it to the Members for Ireland, they would have at once pointed out the difficulties with which that Bill was surrounded. He could take no blame to himself for not being in Parliament at the passing of that Bill. The country was in such a state that he was obliged to be absent. In the same way during this Session it would be utterly impossible for him to attend in that House, for he thought it to be his duty to go where his services were more required. Before referring to the observations that had been made with respect to the gentry of Ireland, on relief committees, he must in the first place examine the manner in which those committees were formed. He held in his hand the instructions given for forming those committees, and he found that the fifth rule contained directions with reference to the functionaries who should compose them. They were to consist of the lord lieutenant of the county, the deputy lieutenant, the Members for the county, the magistrates, the clergymen, the principal officers of the constabulary, the principal officers of the coast guard, and the officers of the Board of Works. Now, such an impossible committee to act together for any good he had never read of. But if the commissioners had been capable of acting for good, the Act they were called upon to administer, was impossible to be carried into effect. There was no test of destitution. That alone made it impossible to bring the Act into operation. Every individual was left to his own opinion as to what was destitution. In short, he thought that, if the Act had ever been intended to work properly, it would not only have given a test of destitution, but would have made it penal to receive assistance without being in a position of necessity. If due care had been taken on this point, the complaint never would have been heard that farmers well to do in the world, and having large farms, were employed on the roads. He did not mean to deny it: he knew full well that such was the fact. Hon. Gentlemen who made the outcry against the landlords, little knew what were the difficulties that the country gentlemen of Ireland had to meet; and it might be well, before they cast blame, if, they looked at home, and saw whether, when they were pressed, they did not give way on what he would call the good-tempered side. When the Act was first brought into operation by the English Government, they attempted to define what should be the wages of the labourer, and attempted a test of destitution by only giving persons on the relief works wages twopence a day below the ordinary rate of the country. They found that was not satisfactory, and they forthwith yielded to the pressure without, to the popular cry, and raised the wages on the works, not only to the ordinary rate of the neighbourhood, but very much beyond it. Nevertheless, they now came down to the House and blamed the country gentlemen of Ireland, who were much more open to the pressure from without, for notwithstanding the effect of the scenes and of the importunities that surrounded them, it was utterly impossible in many parts of Ireland for the country gentleman to know the circumstances of one-half of the population around him. He (Lord Clements) had the misfortune to live in a parish containing 21,285 inhabitants. There was only one magistrate besides himself in the parish. How was it possible for them to know the circumstances of all those people? An officer of the army, Captain Layard, was sent down by the Board of Works to act in that county. He gave that officer the highest credit for his conduct; but he never consulted him (Lord Clements) on his measures. So he gave all the officers of the Government the greatest credit: they had immense difficulties to contend with; but if they had asked the advice of the country gentlemen, those difficulties might have been much abated. The great evil of the Act was the utter distrust which it implied of the country gentlemen of Ireland. In his opinion, it was the duty of a paternal Government to have sought out those gentlemen of Ireland in whom they could confidently trust, and have asked their cooperation. The Chancellor of the Exchequer seemed to have spoken last night under considerable misapprehension, when he complained that in the county of Clare 3,000 persons had been put off the public works; and he did not act quite fairly in casting the reproaches he had. The officer in question was sent down to do this very thing. He had nothing to do with the engineering; another officer had charge of that. If the officers had dismissed the check-clerks whenever they found a single farmer working on the public works, they would have put a stop to the practice at once. Another point of importance to which he wished to invite attention was, that on scarcely any one relief committee had it been required that a list should be made out of the paupers relieved. The committee of which he was a member had drawn the line between those who ought to be relieved and those who ought not, by taking the 4*l.* pivot, because by law all who had houses of 4*l.* rent and under were considered as paupers, and exempted from payment of rates. The Government afterwards directed that 6*l.* should be the pivot. There were within his own knowledge farmers holding four or five acres only who were not only not in want, but able to assist their neighbours. He knew an instance of some such farmers who had six head of cattle on those four or five acres, and it was, in his opinion, a monstrous hardship that these men should be called upon to assist by taxation those who, having as many as twelve acres, through idleness had come to want relief. It was on such grounds as these that he said no Government could be doing its duty who gave relief indiscriminately. The fact was, there were vast numbers of farmers holding from ten to twenty acres who never cultivated or put a spade into the ground, and who now demanded relief, because, being idle men, and sometimes most dissolute characters, they annually let their land in conacre, and that conacre having failed they were become paupers, and now condescended to receive the public money, and to work, or pretend to work, on the roads. He said the Government must make a stand, and not let this system go on. When the Chancellor of the Exchequer talked of the breadth of wheat that had been sown, he (Lord Clements) regretted to say that he believed the wheat that had been sown would prove a melancholy failure, for want of manure, and because much of it had been sown on land that was incapable of yielding a crop. For these reasons the people in his neighbourhood could not possibly exist unless food were carried to them. The noble Lord went into some details to show the fearful state of the neighbourhood in which he lived, and stated, that, being exclusively an agricultural population, they had not an average of an acre and three-fifths to each individual, and that in an exhausted country. The want of mill power also was very inconvenient. A great authority on such subjects (Adam Smith) had stated that the greatest and most important branch of commerce in every nation was that which took place between the inhabitants of town and country, the one taking the raw produce of the other, and paying for it with manufactured goods. But nothing of this kind took place in Ireland: there they had no artisans, no manufactures. Legislation had discouraged both, while it encouraged absentees, and hence the present condition of the country. Unfortunately both for England and Ireland there had been the childish game played of "beggar my neighbour," which had succeeded to the utmost; and he feared if that game were continued, that it would end in the utter discomfort of both countries. But then came hon. Members complaining that they were throwing the relief of Ireland upon English capital; but if the means of that country were destroyed, and if the system of discouraging manufactures and encouraging absenteeism were persevered in, no one had a right to complain of any demand that might be made on English capital. Ireland was at present a perfect slave. The people produced whatever the soil would yield. That produce was exported and sold in England, and the money returned for it was but sent to be returned to England again for the benefit of the absentee proprietors. Such a system must come to an end. It was the bounden duty of every Government to consider how far it could legislate so as to oblige Irish proprietors to reside at home. It was all very well for a legislator to say that there ought not to be such an interference, but the necessities of the case demanded it. The evil was too extensive to be left untouched. He had had the honour to lay upon the Table of the House a petition from jurors of the county Leitrim, complaining of the hardship that every 10*l.* freeholder in the county was obliged to attend in his place whenever he was called on to act as a juror. And was it not monstrous that while 10*l.* freeholders were thus obliged to attend, landed proprietors, deriving probably 10,000*l.* a year from the country, were not only freed from such attendance, but they did not even go near the country for years. One of the great hardships inflicted upon the tenantry by such a system was the manner in which they were left in the power of agents and bailiffs. If there were anything that had given him in his capacity of a magistrate more pain and trouble than another, it was the preserving of poor tenant-farmers from the rapacity of bailiffs acting without proper authority. Charges for burning the land used to be brought by the bailiffs against those poor people without any authority; and the bailiffs were in the habit of putting the money obtained by such means into their own pockets. But to elevate the condition of Ireland, they should not leave the country solely dependent upon agriculture. It was utterly and entirely impossible for a country to be a purely agricultural one without meeting at times with the most appalling reverses. He was himself living in one of the poorest, if not the very poorest, of districts in Ireland. Indeed, the description of it given by the Landlord and Tenant Commission was, that it was the poorest district they had then seen. He was spending day and night there, endeavouring, and he was sorry to say with little success, to improve the condition of the people. But such was their distress, that no later than last Wednesday week 175 poor persons went to his farm-yard to purchase turnips; and they said that when those turnips should have been exhausted, they knew not what they should do. He begged to tell the Government that the establishment of food depôts along the western coast of Ireland was not sufficient. They should establish some inland, for the means of conveyance were very faulty and inefficient, and the transport of provisions inland was consequently very difficult, whilst the provisions of all descriptions heretofore used by the people had nearly disappeared. In the part of the country from whence he came, great numbers of pigs used to be reared. He was informed by a man who was in the habit of purchasing large numbers there, for the purpose of selling elsewhere, that he usually laid out 300*l.* or 400*l.* in one town alone; but on the 14th January, on going to make his purchases as usual, he could obtain only one pig; on making also inquiries of the toll collectors, he ascertained that only nine pigs altogether had been brought for sale. At a fair in another town in the same district, where about 3,000 pigs were usually sold, only 150 were brought last month to market. And one man, who generally laid out 400*l.* or 500*l.* there, was able to obtain only ten pigs. At the place which he had first mentioned, however, there were no less than 142 cows sold. That was a most dangerous sign, for it showed that the people were giving up all hope of hereafter raising cattle. Next year they would be unable to obtain manure, and they would consequently be unable to raise their crops, whilst the land would become to the lowest degree deteriorated. The deterioration had in fact proceeded already to a vast extent. Persons had told him that land for which they had heretofore given 3*l.* an acre, was not now worth 10*s.*, and they would be sorry to give even that for it. The greater portion of the soil would be thrown out of cultivation; and if the Government did not adopt some method which would enforce the keeping up of tillage, the consequences would be fearful. As to the public works about which so much had been said, he could for his own part bear testimony to the good effects produced by them in his neighbourhood, where not a single one of those undertaken had been unproductive of benefit. The fact was, that roads were very much wanted throughout that part of the country, there being many villages to which the old paths were scarcely passable, and therefore the road works were most useful. Recurring to the proposed measures for the improvement of the condition of the people, his Lordship urged, that the mode of rating should be carefully considered. In the Castlebar union there were 3,450 occupiers of land who paid their rates; there were 6,761 who paid no rates, but whose rates were paid by the immediate lessor; and there were 72,382 acres, the occupiers of which paid no rates at all. There were other unions in which similar facts appeared. But with regard to the cultivation of the land, the question was so pressing, and the danger so imminent, that the Government ought at once to consider and adopt some mode by which the holders should be compelled either to cultivate it themselves, or to let others do so. On the subject of the poor law, he should beg to address a few words to those hon. Gentlemen who so praised the Act of Elizabeth, and said, that the whole of its provisions ought to be extended to Ireland. If those Gentlemen would look a little more closely into the matter, they would find that Queen Elizabeth had not effected the improvement of her people solely by the enactment of the poor law. She had shown considerable discretion in the mode of administering those laws; but what were her modes of remodelling the whole face of her kingdom? The poor law was one of the very last of her plans. Previously to its enactment she had passed a whole series of improving measures, amongst which was an Act for the extension and improvement of tillage, passed in the year 1562; another, in the same year, for the encouragement and maintenance of servants in husbandry and apprentices. In 1570 an Act was passed for the prevention of usury, a subject which he strongly recommended to the attention of the right hon. Gentleman. In the same year another Act was passed for the encouragement of tillage, and others for the prevention of idleness. Those were followed by an Act for the erecting and improving of cottages, which made it punishable to erect a cottage upon a holding of less than four acres of land, except it were upon a demesne or in a village or town. These were some of the laws made preparatory to the enactment of the poor law. He knew of no duty—for he considered it to be a duty—more painful than living among the unfortunate population of the district where he resided. For the last eight years of his life he had lived in that district; and during that period he had done all that man could do in endeavouring to assist the poor; and yet he should confess, that he felt discouraged, and almost heartbroken, to see the results of so many years of exertion. It was lamentable to see the poor man famishing without having the means of relieving him; and if the Legislature neglected to declare what should be the pivot on which those who were directed to administer relief were to turn, it was useless to expect that further false steps could be guarded against. Unless the House took the lead in the matter, he was certain that the present would only be the commencement of greater disasters. The land should be cultivated, and if one set of occupiers refused to till it, they should be told that they must make way for others who would.

Mr. LABOUCHERE: Sir, my noble Friend who has just resumed his seat, has blamed very severely the conduct of Her Majesty's Government, and the working of the Labour-rate Act, of which they were the authors; but there was one observation which fell from my noble Friend which gratified me so much, that I confess it entirely removed from my mind any bitter feeling which the other parts of his speech were calculated to create. My noble Friend declared, that in his barony there was no public work executed under this condemned Bill, which, in his judgment, was not of permanent public benefit. I must say that it hardly lay in the mouth of my noble Friend, who, from his sense of justice, felt bound to make this admission—that it hardly lay in the mouth of my noble Friend, after such a declaration, to pronounce so sweeping a censure as he has done on that measure. I confess that I heard that declaration of my noble Friend with some surprise. I believed, certainly, that the evil effects which have been attributed to that Bill, and the wholesale condemnation of the works executed under it, have been much exaggerated by some hon. Gentlemen who have addressed the House in the course of this debate; but still, I confess that I was hardly aware—knowing how just in some respects were the animadversions thrown out, from the nature of the works executed, and from the circumstances under which they were made, as well as from other causes—being, I say, too well aware of the truth on which some of these objections were based, while I at the same time knew that much exaggeration was indulged in, and that the full truth was not set forth to the House—I must confess I felt some surprise at hearing it said by any hon. Member in this House, that in any barony the whole of the works executed under the Bill, were of permanent public benefit. However, while I heard that remark of my noble Friend with the greatest pleasure, I confess it appeared to my mind that it to a great extent outweighed the censure which he thought proper, in other parts of his speech, to throw upon the measure. My noble Friend went on to tax my right hon. Friend the Chancellor of the Exchequer with having passed a sweeping censure on the conduct of the landlords of Ireland. I certainly did not understand my right hon. Friend to have at all used any expressions of that description. I am sure, at all events, that had he done so, I, for one, should have been by no means prepared to have concurred with him in it. I have had during my official residence in Ireland, too many opportunities of observing the conduct of many Irish landlords—several of whom I see in this House at the present moment on all sides of me—and among them, I will venture to add, I should particularly rank my noble Friend who has just sat dawn; and who, to my knowledge, during the last four distressing months in Ireland, has been constantly resident in one of the most distressed districts of that country, exerting himself day by day to alleviate the wants of the poor. I am, I say, too well acquainted with the many instances in which landlords exerted themselves in public, and still more with the innumerable instances of private charity of the gentry in Ireland, to join in any condemnation of them as a class, or of any other class, in that country, in the late circumstances in which they were placed. But this admission is far different from what the truth obliges me to say, that, upon the other hand, it is but too certain that the Government of the country, in resisting the pressure to which they were exposed, and in meeting the tremendous difficulties which they had to grapple with, did not, generally speaking, meet with that support from the gentry of Ireland which they had a right to expect. When I say that the relief committees especially, on whose conduct so much depended, did not give the Government that support which was to be expected from them—when I say that such was the case, I know that there is no honest, conscientious Irishman in this House who will stand up and contradict me. I heard it admitted with sorrow, over and over again, by Irish gentlemen at the time; but still I do not on this account mean to throw blame upon them as a class. I know the difficulties in which they were placed in many instances; I know the unfortunate condition of society in Ireland—that there is a great gulf placed between the Irish landlord and the people; I do not, in the present state of society in Ireland, arising from the past oppression of that country, and the unfortunate circumstances in which she has been placed, attempt to throw the whole blame upon the present generation of landlords. But I state this as a fact—I state this to show that we did not find, generally or universally, men making those extraordinary efforts which, perhaps, ought not to be expected from ordinary men in the circumstances in which they were placed. There were, however, many distinguished, many noble exceptions—many towards whom, as a Member of Her Majesty's Government, I shall entertain for the rest of my life a lasting gratitude for the support which we received from them in our struggle with the difficulties which we had to contend with during the last four months. I say this without any distinction of party. From this place I beg to return my thanks—which I do most sincerely—to the many distinguished and noble persons who hold the front rank in the party that has been always opposed to Her Majesty's present Administration, but who, casting aside on this occasion all party feeling, exerted themselves, influenced only by a desire to remedy the general evil. I would venture to name, as instances of those to whom I allude, such men as Lord Farnham, Lord Roden, and Lord Lorton—men who came forward to assist Her Majesty's Government in every manner in which they were capable of giving assistance, with a total forgetfulness of party feeling on this occasion. While I say this, I feel it to be perfectly consistent to say that I do feel convinced, unless we receive more cordial and general co-operation from the resident proprietors of Ireland than they have hitherto given us, that, adopt what measures we can — devise what schemes we may in this House—all must be useless; and I, for one, must despair of extricating Ireland from the difficulties that surround her—difficulties that, it should be borne in mind, are of no light or trivial character; and the longer those difficulties are permitted to exist, the more tremendous will their influence be found. I hope it will not be inferred from what I have said, that I wish to make any observations in a spirit of discouragement; on the contrary, I have always contended that if the evils by which we are threatened be met with manly spirit, and by the united strength of the nation—if we are supported by all ranks and by different parties, I have no doubt that the country will be safely carried through every danger now impending. But it would be pusillanimous and weak to pretend that there is not an awful struggle yet before us. Sir, a great deal of the discussion which has taken place during the last two nights, has been occupied with disputes about the spirit in which we ought to treat Ireland on the present occasion. I must say, Sir, that I heard a great deal of what has been said on that subject with regret. I think that the great majority of this House is disposed to treat Ireland with a becoming and proper spirit on this occasion, and that none contend that Ireland is to be considered as a mendicant applying for alms to the Imperial Legislature. That is not the footing on which assistance should be asked or should be granted by England under existing circumstances. I think that relief should be granted as a matter of justice, and that the relation between the two countries should be considered as that between the members of a family, where some one member of that family has been afflicted by some great, and sudden, and tremendous distress; and that just as the other members of the family would be bound in a spirit of humanity and justice to come to the relief of the other suffering member, so it is incumbent on the Imperial Legislature to come forward and relieve the weak and suffering member of the United Kingdom at the present moment. Now, Sir, I really do not at all feel tempted to trespass at any great length on the attention of the House on the present occasion. I think there is a very general feeling on the part of the House—if I have not misinterpreted altogether the sentiments expressed—for giving a favourable consideration to the proposals of Her Majesty's Government, so far as to allow the Bills to be read a second time, and to be afterwards discussed in Committee. If that be the case, I will venture to express a hope that the House will not allow any long interval to take place before the consideration of those measures comes on in Committee. I allude particularly to the measure for the temporary relief of the distress in Ireland, which measure, if the House sanctions it at all, it is exceedingly important should be passed without any more loss of time than is absolutely necessary for discussion upon it. The House, I take it, are generally of opinion, that whatever may be said of the system of relief afforded on the public works which are now carried on in Ireland, it is high time that these works should be brought to a close as speedily as is consistent with the safety of Ireland, and that some other system should be adopted in place of it. Now, if that be so, it is very important that no time should be lost in this matter. I do not myself think that much injury has yet been done by the existing system of relief by means of public works, drawing the people from the cultivation of the soil. I do not say that some injurious effect may not have been produced in this manner; but I believe that the effect is considerably exaggerated. The Irish Government thought it to be its duty, a short time since, considering the importance of the subject, to issue forms, to be filled up by the inspectors of constabulary throughout Ireland, asking for information as to the cultivation of the soil in their respective districts. The result of their returns was, in the first place, that there is a much larger breadth of wheat sown this year than was the case in former years; and that in many cases where potatoes would otherwise have been sown, the land is now under rye and bere, which crops have been substituted for the potato. It certainly appears that very little has been done in preparing the ground for the other crops; but it is notorious that in Ireland the preparation of the soil for spring crops is put off much longer than in this country; and from the best information that I have been able to obtain, it appears that hitherto no material injury has occurred in this respect, and that provided the labour of the country were now set free, there is yet ample time to cultivate the soil of Ireland properly in the ensuing year, and to secure that most important object, namely, that a supply of food next season for the support of the people hereafter shall not be neglected. But it also must be obvious, that if the system of public works which is in progress, even while we are speaking, be continued, a delay in agricultural pursuits must take place, and that thus a most enormous evil will result if this system be persevered in much longer, as it must be unless we allow the people to starve by thousands, or unless we substitute some other system for it. Unless this be done, we shall incur the greatest danger, arising from the non-cultivation of the soil for the next year. In throwing out this statement to the House, I do not certainly desire to forego any fair and necessary discussion to which the measures of the Government ought to be submitted; but if the House be of opinion that these Bills should be read a second time, and afterwards considered in Committee, I wish to impress on hon. Gentlemen the importance of not permitting any unreasonable delay to take place before the second reading. Sir, my right hon. Friend the Chancellor of the Exchequer entered so fully and so ably both into a vindication of the past measures of the Government, and into an explanation of the future measures which we have laid before Parliament, as to relieve me from the necessity of following in the task which he has performed so much more ably than I should have done; but some observations have been made by the hon. Gentleman in the course of this debate which I cannot avoid alluding to. Almost every Irish landlord who has addressed the House, has concurred in blaming the Government for not having, to a much greater degree, interfered with the provision trade of Ireland under the present circumstances of that country. I have no right to complain of the tone of those observations. I feel that every hon. Gentleman who has spoken has done us the justice to believe that we have acted with the best intentions; and that, though errors have been imputed to us, they have not believed them to be other than errors of judgment. If, however, it had been otherwise, and there had been a greater degree of asperity in the remarks of those who do not altogether agree with us, I should not have complained. But, at the same time, I am bound to say that I do differ altogether from them. I can assure them that this determination on the part of the Government was not formed without most mature consideration; and I am bound also to declare, that so far from experience having altered our opinions upon this subject, we are, on the contrary, more than ever convinced, that if we had followed the course which they recommend—if we had done as the House has been told to-night we ought to have done—ourselves imported provisions into Ireland upon a great scale, and then have opened depôts, not only upon the west coast, but along the southern and northern coasts too, at particular points, and throughout the whole interior—if, I say, we had, in short, become not only the great importers, but the great distributors of food in Ireland, my own conviction is, we should have aggravated in a tenfold degree the horrors of famine. It is not sufficient for hon. Gentlemen to rise up and say that the abstract doctrines of political economy should give way before the pressure of practical distress. That is begging the whole question. If practical distress would have been relieved, and prices reduced—if human lives would have been saved, it was not a blind attachment to the abstract principles of political economy, still less any particular regard for merchants who happen to deal in this particular commodity, that would have prevented the Government from interposing; but it was because we believed distress would have been aggravated, that prices would have been higher, and that more lives would have been lost, that we did not interfere in this manner. These were the reasons which led us to form our present determination; and these are the reasons which have induced us to persist in maintaining that determination. Nothing could have exhibited a more criminal weakness in the Government upon a question of this kind —a question upon which the lives of the people depended—than to have yielded to popular clamour, and secured a small popularity by the sacrifice of principles which we believe to be just and true. We have been blamed, among other things, by hon. Members, who have said to us, "When you had this corn in the country, why did you not sell it under the cost price—why did you not allow the relief committees to dispose of it at less than it cost? it would have been so much better." The reason is, because we thought it of infinite consequence to foster in every manner the retail traders of Ireland. I believe that Ireland is not safe for a single moment if retail traders are not much more extensively established than they are present. It is absolutely impossible that the country can be saved from starvation where the people do not live upon wages, but upon the produce of their own tillage. It was upon this view that we refused to lend assistance to relief committees who would not go upon the principle—which we thought an important principle—of not selling under cost price, so as not to discourage the efforts of traders to supply the wants of the country. I hold in my hand a letter I lately received on this subject, which I will read to the House, because I think a single instance, showing how a principle of this kind works in a particular neighbourhood, is worth more than any mere declaration of it. It is from the chairman of the relief committee at Castle Pollard, in the county Westmeath—Mr. W. Pollard; and this gentleman, writing upon this subject to the Secretary of the Commissariat Department at Dublin, on the 19th of last month, says—

> "The advantage of selling meal at a price which allows a fair profit has been confirmed, inasmuch as it is sold in some districts at the same price as that offered by the relief committee, where it used not to be so until we obeyed the directions of the Government in this respect."

This is only a specimen of what is going on in every part of Ireland; and I will ask the House whether Government is not doing better for the supply of food by taking care not to check the growth of these retail traders—by taking care not to prevent traders from providing those supplies of food which are absolutely necessary—by acting upon a system which does not discourage the growth of a retail trade of this description—rather than by saying, "We will sell at a false price, and prevent the traders in this commodity from meeting the demand, and thus teach the people to depend upon the resources of the Government." I say, Sir, it is real wisdom, as well as true humanity, no less than sound common sense, which, after all, are the doctrines of political economy in this case, to act upon these principles—principles which have been tried by experience—rather than to be driven from them by clamour, however plausible may be the argument adduced to induce us to do so. Another hon. Gentleman, the Member for Clonmel (Mr. Lawless), whom I have had the pleasure to hear for the first time tonight, has said we did very wrong in not stopping the distilleries in Ireland. That, Sir, is a very large question: but without going at length into it just now, it would not be very difficult to prove to the House that if we had stopped the distilleries of Ireland, it would have been necessary to stop those in England and Scotland also. It would have been impossible to have had one law for Ireland, and another for England and Scotland on this subject; whilst, in reality, so far from the people of Ireland deriving any good from it, we should have done them a very great mischief. I believe the only effect would have been to have revived the smuggling trade, which it has taken us so much trouble to put down. We should certainly have made a great sacrifice of revenue, we should have deranged trade, and we should have ruined many traders, whilst the hope of practical relief from any measure of the kind remained most visionary. Whilst upon this subject, I may state that the hon. Member for Meath (Mr. H. Grattan), on a former occasion mentioned the name of a most respectable distiller in Dublin, Mr. George Rose, as consuming an immense quantity of oats. I have a letter from that gentleman upon the subject of the hon. Member's statement, which he is anxious I should read to the House, in which he says that not only was the quantity of oats stated beyond the quantity he used, but that in point of fact he did not consume a single barrel of oats or barley which he had not imported from abroad. So that to stop the distilleries as a remedy for the evils of Ireland, would have prevented a great many persons from earning their livelihood; and it would not have saved any amount of provisions for the consumption of the people. I am unwilling now to make any observations upon what has been said with regard to the measures proposed by Her Majesty's Government for the relief of Ireland, because I feel that those measures are each of them so important as to deserve grave and separate consideration, and because they cannot be discussed with much advantage in the general manner in which they must be treated upon this occasion. I will only say, I think it most unjust to say of them that they are characterized by a design to enrich the Irish landlords without consideration of their effect upon the main body of the people. That certainly is not the scope or intention of those measures, and I do not believe it will be their effect. But let us consider what are the wants of Ireland at this moment. One of the great wants of Ireland is that of employment for her people. I really do not know in what way you can furnish employment to the people of Ireland—unless you are prepared to do so directly through the agency of the State, which is by no means a favourite plan in this House—if it is not to be given through the means of the owners of the soil. The measures of Her Majesty's Government are favourable to the landholders of Ireland, and they are calculated to afford them facilities to employ the great body of the people; and this I hold to be a sound principle. The credit of England is lent to the landholders of Ireland for that purpose, and I think this a perfectly legitimate use of that credit. I do not agree with those who have said that former loans of this description have not been repaid; on the contrary, I think that funds so advanced for such a purpose have all been repaid. I certainly conceive we have a full right to expect that every shilling of money voluntarily taken by any Irish landowner to enable him to employ the people, shall be faithfully repaid. It is not only just to this country and to the Imperial Treasury that this should be so, but I believe it is for the real interests of Ireland that the payment of all such debts should be strictly enforced. In the present condition of Ireland, it is of the utmost consequence that the produce of her soil, the productiveness of her agriculture, her power of producing human food, should be augmented as rapidly as possible. When we consider how sweeping has been the destruction of the particular food upon which the people have hitherto subsisted—what millions are left upon the surface of the soil without the prospect of sufficient food and sustenance, the House will at once see of what infinite importance it is to give a stimulus, by every legitimate means in our power, to an increased fruitfulness of the soil. I believe no means will be so efficient for this object as drainage works upon a great scale, which will enable that country, with her natural fertility of soil, to produce grain crops in a greater degree than she now does. I conceive that all these means of furnishing employment, and all the powers of increasing the produce of the soil, are just and legitimate ways in which the assistance of England can be given to Ireland. Whether these principles have been carried into effect in the most judicious manner, will be seen when our measures are considered in detail. I think, however, that I have a right to suppose that in principle they have received the general concurrence of this House. I really do not think I need trespass any longer upon the attention of the House. I can only say that I have observed with the greatest gratification the temper and spirit with which the House has received those most important questions which are now submitted to its deliberation. I gather from that spirit the greatest benefit to Ireland. I confess I think that the spirit which has been evinced by the House upon this occasion, is almost of equal importance to Ireland as the measures themselves; and I cannot help hoping that it will be appreciated in that country in a manner in which I think it ought to be. I must also say that I think I see in Ireland some symptoms of a spirit of union, energy, self-reliance, and moderation, rising up, from which I expect the best consequences. I see Irishmen of every party acting together for the benefit of their country, and fairly claiming for their country that consideration which is due to it. I hope, in thus uniting together, they will take care to show to the empire at large they are not acting in any selfish or grasping spirit, that they are only desirous of laying before the Imperial Parliament the state of the Irish people; and, appealing for justice, they may depend upon it that so long as they do so, they will never have to complain that either the Parliament or the people of England are not ready to do for Ireland all that she can reasonably and fairly expect.

SIR R. PEEL: I fully concur with the right hon. Gentleman, that it would be much more advantageous to discuss those measures that are intended to effect permanent improvements in the condition and state of the people of Ireland when we shall be in possession of them, than to obstruct the progress of the present Bill, for the purpose of entering upon a general debate. At the same time, I am not surprised that hon. Gentlemen connected with Ireland, after witnessing the scenes which they have witnessed — after having had to struggle with the difficulties with which they have had to contend—feeling, as they must, the deepest interest in the welfare of their native country, and the deepest sympathy with those who are suffering from the terrible calamity with which it is afflicted—I am not surprised, I say, that they should avail themselves of the earliest opportunity to submit their views to the House with regard to the operation of the measures proposed by Her Majesty's Government. But I, for one, not having the same motives for entering into discussion which they have, feel it of so much importance that we should at once enact those measures which are intended to meet the difficulties of the present time, that I am unwilling to oppose any impediment in the way of passing them. I am prepared to grant, as I think they are entitled to ask, full and complete indemnity to Her Majesty's Government for the responsibilities which they have assumed in the crisis through which they have passed. I think, however, it might be advantageous, with reference to the future, that in the Bill which guarantees this indemnity—an indemnity which Parliament is so willing to concede — there should be a full explanation of the circumstances under which the responsibility had been assumed by the Government. Observe, I entirely approve of the assumption of that responsibility; yet still, where the Executive Government, however justifiable the act may be, do undertake to supersede the ordinary operation of the law, I doubt whether it is not for the public advantage that all the circumstances connected with that assumption of power by the Executive should be fully set forth. I, therefore, would advise Her Majesty's Government to consider whether or no in the Bill, the letter, for instance, which bears the signature of the right hon. Gentleman, which explains the circumstances under which the Labour Act was superseded—whether, for the advantage of those who may hereafter have to refer to this assumption of power, and to the indemnity granted by Parliament, the letter should not be set forth by which this authority on the part of the Executive was assumed. I, therefore, am at once prepared to vote for the Bill which gives an indemnity to Her Majesty's Government. And with regard to the Bill which constitutes relief committees, and which is intended to make a total alteration in the system under which relief is now granted; I am also willing to give my assent at once to that measure. I think the evils of the present system are very great; and that the sooner you apply a remedy the better. I cannot help thinking there is great danger, considering how nearly we are approaching that period when it will be impossible to employ labour upon reproductive works, so far as concerns the harvest of the next year — I think, I say, the sooner we enable the Government to make a material alteration in the present system, and promote labour, by applying it to the present cultivation of the soil, the greater is the prospect of a diminution of the present difficulty. I apprehend there are scarcely two months left, when, with reference to the spring corn—although I know that the labour is applied in Ireland partly from the condition of the soil, and partly from the greater moisture of the climate—although it is usual from these causes to apply labour to the cultivation of the soil for the purpose of producing spring crops at a later period of the year than in England, yet we are fast approaching that period when labour so applied will be applied in vain. I think, therefore, the sooner we make an alteration in the present system, the better will it be for the future condition of Ireland. But, I must say, I am rather surprised at the right hon. Gentleman (Mr. Labouchere) underrating the dangers that arise from the application of labour to what are called "public works." I beg to remind the right hon. Gentleman, that he himself, in August last, speaking of the operations of the late Government, when there were not more than 60,000 or 70,000 men employed on public works, then stated, that very great inconvenience arose in Ireland from diverting labour from its ordinary course. If that were the case in August last, when not more than 60,000 or 70,000 men were employed, how much greater must the inconvenience be to the cultivation of the soil when there are not less than half a million of persons employed on what are called public works? I am quite ready to give wide discretionary power to the Government for the purpose of altering that system; but having read these two volumes (returns presented yesterday morning), so far as it was possible for me to do, considering the short time they have been issued, I must say the officers who have been engaged in carrying this system into operation are entitled to the greatest credit. I do not wish to compliment them at the expense of the proprietors of Ireland. I dare say there may be much truth in what the right hon. Gentleman says; yet, at the same time, I think we ought to make great allowances for the difficulties with which the Government of Ireland have had to contend. When I hear the account—and, I believe, the accurate account — which the noble Lord (Lord Clements) gave to-night, not assuming an ostentatious tone, but of his having devoted ten years to a struggle with great difficulties in attempting to improve the condition of those with whom he is connected, and who are dependent upon him, and of persons like himself, and lamenting that they had been attended with so little success;

so far from blaming that noble Lord for want of success, I give him all due praise and honour for having persevered, notwithstanding the temptations which were offered him of absence from his native land. I give him, and all those like him, the highest praise for having set aside all those temptations; and, although they have failed in realizing all they hoped to attain, I think the responsibility of failure does not rest with them. We, in England, know well what are the difficulties interposed in the way of such efforts, arising out of the state of society in Ireland, and the condition of the tenure of land; and, therefore, notwithstanding the noble Lord's admission of failure, I am prepared to give to him, and to those others who have done their best, the highest credit for their exertions, without making any abatement from it on account of the admitted failure and disappointment of their expectations. And I must say, also, with respect to that sex which always stands most prominently forward in works of charity—speaking of the Irish ladies and females—I will say, that no country has ever given such instances of devotion, not only of pecuniary sacrifice, but sacrifices of health, of time, and of all worldly interests, as Ireland exhibited in this respect, in their attempt to mitigate these great evils. And I must also say, that I give credit—and I was sorry to hear any reflection thrown upon them—to the subordinate officers of the Board of Works. I believe that the spirit which has animated them, and all who were employed with them, has been inspired by the untiring activity, the integrity, and the devotedness of Mr. Trevelyan, under whose immediate superintendence their operations have been conducted. I do not believe that that gentleman has been influenced by any spirit of hostility towards Ireland—far from it; for who could suppose that any man, with all the other duties which devolve upon him, could have devoted so much of time and attention in attempting to mitigate the evils with which Ireland is afflicted, unless influenced, not only by a high sense of public duty, but also by a most earnest desire to advance the best interests of the country? But having read these volumes—having seen the firmness, the resolution, the intelligence, evinced by so many men, all on a sudden performing functions to which they were strange, and duties the most arduous, even when attempts were made to intimidate them, and where but little encouragement was offered them—I say, seeing all this, I think it quite right that they should be invested with a full discretionary power in carrying out the system by which the evils are to be remedied. With respect to Sir Randolph Routh, to the commissariat, to all the officers, superior and inferior, it is impossible to read these volumes without seeing that they deserve the highest credit for the industry, intelligence, integrity, and devotion of every faculty of body and mind, without thought of themselves, which they have brought to the performance of their arduous duties. I therefore can conceive no persons better qualified for these duties. I believe that you must leave a wide discretion—that the attempt to limit it by means of legislative enactments would be unwise—and that the best hope of relief from the evils of the present system is in giving a wide discretionary authority; and seeing proofs of great intelligence and zeal in the officers I have referred to, I am willing to confide in them. With respect to the other measures to which the noble Lord at the head of the Government has adverted, and which have regard to the permanent condition of Ireland, it would be unjust towards the noble Lord to enter upon their consideration at present. They are not the measures which we have to dispose of to-night; they bear as permanent measures on the condition of Ireland. The House not being in possession of the Bills relating to those measures, it is impossible to form a correct judgment of their principle without seeing the details; but by far the most important of them, I should venture to say, is the Bill to enable those who are in the nominal possession of incumbered properties to sell those properties. That Bill is ten times more important, as bearing on the permanent condition of Ireland, than these we are now discussing; but, not being yet in possession of the Bill, we should only prejudice the future consideration of that most important measure by now expressing our respective views on the subject. With respect to the proposition for the cultivation of waste lands in Ireland, I shall only so far allude to that proposition as to express a hope that the noble Lord will pause before he expends so much of the public money on those lands. I am of opinion that the hon. Member for Wycombe exaggerated the views of the noble Lord on that subject. He said that the noble Lord undertook to cultivate 4,600,000 acres of waste land, and that very little benefit would be derived from it. I did not understand that the noble Lord had made a proposition so extensive as that the Government should undertake to reclaim so much waste land; but I beg the noble Lord to bear in mind the observations with which he concluded his speech the other evening. Addressing the people of Ireland, he advised them "to help themselves," and then they might depend on external aid. I advise the noble Lord to carry that principle into effect as far as he can. I would advise him, if possible, to teach the Irish proprietors to act independently of the aid of Government. I would say to the Irish proprietors, that "it is the constant invocation of 'the Castle' which damps your energies. You are not so inactive, so devoid of intelligence, that you need to be constantly calling in the aid of the Government." Let us be liberal—let us be just to Ireland; but depend on it that we shall be incumbering that country, and paralysing her exertions, if we teach her to rely too much on Government assistance. This is true in respect to the cultivation of land, as in respect to the feeling of the people. Depend on it, the cultivation of the soil must depend on the energies of the people, and not on the assistance of the Government. If we look to the history of works undertaken by external aid, such as model farms, &c., with their expensive agency, it will be found that the result is to deter the people from entering into similar enterprises; and, generally the work done by Government agency is more imperfectly done than when effected by individual enterprise, or by individual speculators, with an eye to gain, and who watch the expenditure of every penny, and dispense with the aid of an extensive staff of agents. The latter is the way in which the permanent improvement of the land is to be expected. Facilitate the drainage of private estates, and, as the private proprietors cannot undertake the great outlets of water, this may be a very fit work for the Government to undertake, taking care to insure the due payment of the expense from those who benefit by it. But with respect to the cultivation of bogs and waste lands in Ireland, I cannot help thinking that, with the encouragement there has been to employ private capital in the cultivation of land which would repay the outlay, if the noble Lord's Bill for permitting the sale of incumbered estates should be effective, these enterprises for reclaiming waste lands will be undertaken by private individuals if they are likely to be profitable; and if not, then public money would only be thrown away on them. I trust that my readiness to give the indemnity now asked for, to give discretionary powers, and the tone in which I have spoken, will convince the noble Lord that I am not actuated by any party spirit, or hostility to the Government. With respect to these measures of permanent operation in Ireland, we cannot perform our duty without expressing our views fairly and honestly, uninfluenced by party spirit; and I hope the noble Lord will consider before he embarks in so extensive an operation as that of the cultivation of the waste lands. He has plenty of other duties to perform besides undertaking to improve the Irish bogs. With respect to the poor law, I will not at present say a single word. That is a subject of the deepest importance, and it is better to reserve the discussion of it until we see the measure. It is, however, of the utmost importance that we should now give the Government assurance of the indemnity asked for; and after the present debate concludes, I hope that we shall without delay set about the preparation of the new system by which the present defective system in Ireland is to be superseded.

Mr. A. STAFFORD O'BRIEN had no intention to oppose the Bills under the consideration of the House, for he gave, with respect to those measures, his heartiest support to the Government; and he admitted that whenever he had occasion to communicate with the Government on these subjects, his suggestions had been readily considered. The right hon. Baronet had offered some well-considered suggestions on the subject of the waste lands; but he believed that the recommendation of that measure had originated on this side of the water, and not from Irish Gentlemen. As to the temporary arrangement proposed by this Bill, he did not believe the time had at all passed by for agricultural operations. In the part of Ireland with which he was connected, the process of sowing the spring corn would not, in ordinary years, have commenced yet. The chances of the next harvest were good; but that which must be impressed upon the landowners and occupiers was, that they must second the exertions of Government by their individual efforts. Without those efforts, all that any Government could do for Ireland must be in vain.

Bill read a second time.

DESTITUTE PERSONS (IRELAND) BILL.

LORD J. RUSSELL, in moving the Second Reading of the Destitute Persons (Ireland) Bill, stated, that as this was a Bill for the immediate substitution of a different system from that at present in operation, it was desirable that it should be proceeded with forthwith. He thought it right, as the Government had taken steps which were not in conformity with the law, that the sanction of Parliament should first be asked for those measures; but the Bill with that object having now been read a second time, he should propose to proceed first with the Bill the second reading of which he was moving.

MR. BOUVERIE urged that the House was about to deal, not with a temporary deficiency, but a *sine die* deficiency in the produce of the country, and in employment; the measures adopted should therefore be directed mainly to the permanent improvement and development of the powers of the country. Sir R. Kane calculated that it would require five acres of grain to supply as much subsistence as one acre of potatoes. What was to be done with so many hundred thousand families who must be dependent on the public resources? The attempt to employ them had failed; else why give it up? It was now proposed to feed all that mass out of the Consolidated Fund. No man would grudge it, if it would permanently benefit them; but the fear was, that we were but beginning a course in which we must at last stop, and then find their case more disastrous than ever. Without opposing the Bill, he must protest against the principle of attempting to feed an entire population out of the public funds.

MR. GOULBURN wished to suggest an amendment to the noble Lord. The Bill proposed to give the Government an indefinite power of drawing upon the Consolidated Fund to any amount. He would suggest to them that it would be more constitutional, and better in every respect, to call upon the House from time to time for supplies, however large, for a definite period. Probably the Government would take this suggestion into consideration.

Bill read a second time.

House adjourned at half-past Eleven o'clock.

HOUSE OF COMMONS,

Wednesday, February 3, 1847.

MINUTES.] PUBLIC BILLS.—3° and passed:—Chelsea Pensions.

PETITIONS PRESENTED. From Kirkheaton, Huddersfield, and Chorley, for Limiting the Hours of Labour in Factories.—From Drogheda, for carrying into effect the Recommendations of the Select Committee with respect to Lighthouses.—From Andover, for Repeal or Amendment of Poor Removal Act.

MR. SPEAKER took the chair at Twelve o'clock.

THE RAILWAY BOARD.

MR. HUME wished to know whether the Government were taking measures, or intended to take measures, for carrying out the principle recommended by the Committee of last Session, of making preliminary inquiries into the details of Private Bills before they were submitted to the House. The Railway Board, as a matter of course, ought to take charge of the preliminary inquiries connected with applications for Railway Bills, in order that by inquiries on the spot the relative merits of contending schemes might be ascertained. If the board had discovered that the powers with which they were invested were inadequate to the right discharge of their duties, they should make a report to the House on the subject. He had understood from a statement made by Mr. Phillips that great satisfaction had been given in the working of the Private Bill Act of last Session. It had been the means of saving money and time, and adjusting differences between local parties. He wished to know what measures the Railway Board were taking for carrying out preliminary inquiries, and whether they were prepared to report to the House their opinion on each line before it was submitted to Parliament? Unless this was done, he thought that the board would fail in a most essential particular.

MR. STRUTT agreed with the hon. Member for Montrose in the advantage of a preliminary inquiry being made before any Private Bill was brought before the House. Last year a Bill had been passed authorizing preliminary inquiries to be made on the spot in reference to a certain class of Bills; and he could bear testimony with Mr. Hume to the beneficial effects which had arisen from that measure; and he also agreed with the hon. Member in thinking that the same principle should be applied to Railway Bills. That question had been referred to the Railway Board, and a measure authorizing preliminary inquiries on the respective merits of railway projects was in preparation, and in a short time would be submitted to the House. He could assure the hon. Member for Montrose that no unnecessary delay had taken place.

Mr. HUME expressed his satisfaction at the statement made, and begged to assure the hon. Gentleman that he had made no charge against the board of negligence or delay.

THE MILLBANK PRISON COMMISSION.

Mr. M. GORE moved—

> "That an humble Address be presented to Her Majesty that She will be graciously pleased to give directions that there be laid before this House, a Copy of the Report made to Her Majesty by Mr. Escott, a Member of this House, on the state of Millbank Prison."

Sir G. GREY said, that a Report from the Commissioners had been received, and presented to the House. It was a joint commission, and required a joint report. It bore the signatures of two of the Commissioners, the hon. Member for Winchester having declined to attach his name. That hon. Gentleman, however, had signified his wish to make a separate report; but he (Sir G. Grey) had intimated to the hon. Gentleman, that the usual course under such circumstances, was to embody his sentiments in a letter addressed to the Secretary of State, in which shape it would be presented to the House. Mr. Escott, however, had sent in a report addressed to the Crown; but it had been returned to him, the document not being in the shape in which it could be presented to the House.

Mr. B. ESCOTT said, that it was disagreeable to him to press a Motion which was contrary to the views of the right hon. Gentleman; but certainly his views of what was right were entirely different from the opinions of the right hon. Gentleman. It was true that the commission consisted of three persons who were commanded by Her Majesty to report upon the subject submitted to their consideration. Two of these Commissioners, he understood, had presented a report, but for himself he had not done so. He did not agree in the opinions of his two Colleagues; and since their report had been made, he thought it his duty to report also. He had been told, however, by the right hon. Gentleman, that if he would state his opinions in a letter, it would be reported to the House. It appeared to him to be immaterial in what shape his opinions were presented; but he thought that when Gentlemen were commanded by a Royal Commission to inquire into certain grave matters, it was absolutely necessary that the command should be fulfilled, and in such a case something more than a mere matter of form was involved. He had no doubt that his two Colleagues had conscientiously discharged their duty in making the report which they had made; but he also considered it to be his duty to make a report too. As to form, however, he did not think that his two Colleagues had adhered to it themselves, and it was, therefore, the more imperative upon him to make a report in the proper form.

Sir G. GREY said, that Mr. Escott seemed still to misunderstand him. He did not wish him to alter one word of his report; all that he wished was that the report, instead of being addressed to Her Majesty, and signed under his (Mr. Escott's) hand and seal, should be addressed in the form of a letter to the Secretary of State. He understood that the delay which had occurred in sending in the report, had arisen from the hon. Member for Winchester having declined to sign it.

Mr. ESCOTT differed from the report of the other Commissioners, and had no choice but to make a separate report.

Mr. T. DUNCOMBE thought the question whether the hon. Member should write a letter or make a report was immaterial, so that the House was put in possession of the matter. In point of form, however, he thought that the hon. Member for Winchester was right, for it was according to precedent, to the ordinary practice, and to the commands of Her Majesty, that a report should be made. The commission stated that the Commissioners were "to report severally under their hands and seal;" and he did think the hon. Member for Winchester was at liberty to report separately if he thought proper. Moreover, there was appended to the report of the other two Commissioners a statement that their Colleague preferred making a separate report—an announcement which evidently, by inferring that another report was coming, kept the matter open. When the Municipal Commissioners sat, Sir Francis Palgrave sent in a separate report, to which no objection was made; and he therefore did not see why one should not be received in this case. For his own part, he thought there ought to be another commission; and he felt certain that the right hon. Baronet, had he read the evidence, would be of the same opinion. He thought that the hon. Member's conclusions on the evidence would come much better in the shape of a report than in a letter.

Mr. ROEBUCK said, the first part of the commission gave powers to the Commissioners, or to two of them, to do certain things; and therefore, unless there were two of them together, they could not act. All their proceedings, supposing them to have sat in three separate chambers, would be illegal. A unity of action was essential. The next clauses, however, ordering the Commissioners to report, left them at liberty to report either together or separately.

Mr. FOX MAULE thought the discussion a waste of time, as not the slightest alteration in the hon. Gentleman's report was required, except to make it into a letter. A report signed by two Commissioners, they constituting a majority, was, in fact, the report of the whole commission, He did not recollect the case referred to by the hon. Member for Finsbury; but he did remember that one of the commission appointed in reference to the condition of the poor in Scotland did not agree with his Colleagues; and at the end of the report his objections were appended under the heading, "Dissent for the following reasons." The hon. Member for Winchester, he submitted, ought to have taken a similar course.

Motion withdrawn.

ARMY STATISTICS.

Mr. HUME wished to ask the right hon. Secretary at War whether any arrangements had been made to continue the Military Statistics of India which Major Tulloch had formerly prepared. These statistics were of the greatest importance, as it was only by their means that they could tell anything about the health of the troops. He would also ask whether the hon. Gentleman had received from India the returns he (Mr. Hume) had moved for some time ago on this subject?

Mr. F. MAULE was not aware whether the returns had been received, but he would inquire at the War Office. With respect to the statistics of Major Tulloch, the time of that gallant officer had been occupied latterly in other matters, but it was intended to resume them as soon as possible.

House adjourned at a quarter past One o'clock.

HOUSE OF LORDS,

Thursday, February 4, 1847.

Minutes.] Public Bills.—1ª Chelsea Pensions.

Petitions Presented. From Ilkeston, and Fornham, St. Martin's, for the Abolition of the present Law of Settlement, and the Enacting of Laws more conducive to the Welfare of the Poor.—From Cork, for the Adoption of such Measures as will ensure a proper Supply of Food to the People of Ireland.—From Clackmannan, and Kincardine, against the Proposed Measure for Lowering the Duty on Rum.—From T. T. Crybbace, A.M., for the Adoption of Measures for the Better Regulation of Wages, and for the Employment of the People of Ireland.

IRISH POOR IN LIVERPOOL.

Lord BROUGHAM said, he found he had been led into error by a valued correspondent in stating that the soup-kitchens of Liverpool were shut upon the Sundays. He had received a communication from the committee, in which they denied the statement; and he was bound to say he had been misinformed, his friend, no doubt, having made the statement, not upon his own authority, but upon that of others. He found, however, that in Glasgow the fact was so. He then held in his hand a bread and soup ticket, given by some charitable person in Glasgow, which would entitle the holder to a certain amount of bread and soup on any day until the 1st of May, except on Sundays. These words were printed on the card, so there could be no mistake in that case. But that was of a piece with the usual conduct of the Sabbatarians of that city. A fire took place in Glasgow some time ago, wherein damage was done to the amount of thousands. The fire was on a Sunday, and the proprietor was in Edinburgh. Of course his presence was very necessary, and application was made to the railway authorities that a person might be allowed to go for him by the mail train; but this request they absolutely refused, so that those persons thought that works of mercy and necessity were great crimes if performed on a Sunday. The influx of Irish paupers was still going on: on the 30th of January, no less than 1,063 were landed; and on the 31st, 2,278. From Cork, on the extreme west coast of Ireland, there came 240; from Sligo, 701; Drogheda, 692; Newry, 272; and from Dublin, 911; with others from various places, making 3,340 persons in two days; while thousands were still flocking down to the ports for the purpose of following. What was to be done under such circumstances? The Government ought not to confine their relief to the Irish landlords and the Irish generally. Was Liverpool to have no relief? He had seen it stated that Ireland need not despair while there was a guinea in the English Exchequer. What! was that to be the rule? The English were suffering as well as the Irish and the Scotch; they were not dying of starvation, but they were wearing out their lives by a slow but no less sure progress. Was it not a grievance that Liverpool was to be so inundated that in eleven days they were compelled to afford relief in 198,000 cases in addition to their own poor? Did the people of Liverpool want no relief? They asked for it, and in his opinion they had a right to demand it.

THE PRICE OF FOOD.

The **Marquess** of **LANSDOWNE** presented a petition from the mayor, aldermen, and burgesses of Cork, praying of their Lordships to take some measures for the purpose of diminishing the price of food in Ireland. The noble Marquess took that opportunity of stating that he concurred in the opinion expressed by his noble and learned Friend opposite (Lord Brougham) the other evening, that the Government ought not to take any measures which would interfere with the market price of food. The system had been tried, and it had been found to operate most injuriously. The result was a grievous scarcity of provisions in every place the very week following that during which it had been tried; and in some instances, the provision dealers were obliged to shut up their shops, in consequence of the losses they had sustained. He was also perfectly ready to concur in opinion with the noble and learned Lord, that it was the duty of the Government, as far as possible, to remit obstructions to supplies of food being obtained by the people.

The **Duke** of **RICHMOND**: I think it is desirable that it should not go forth to the country that there is likely to be a great dearth of provisions in this country. So much has been stated about famine in Ireland, it is now said in many parts of England that there will be a scarcity of corn, and that all the evils of a famine may be apprehended. Now, I believe that that is not the case, as I believe that there is a great deal of corn in the hands of persons in this country. Besides, when, coupled with this, we see such large imports of grain from the United States, there is little reason for people to consider that the country will encounter a famine. I, for one, have no apprehension of a famine here.

Earl FITZWILLIAM had not the slightest doubt that the supply of wheat, both in England and Ireland, was sufficient for those who were consumers of wheat. This would necessarily be absorbed, and certainly the finer qualities of wheat would be scarce, and perhaps there might be a scarcity in the secondary qualities also; but he was anxious to correct one mistake which might be injurious out of doors. An impression had been created by the words of his noble and learned Friend, and he was anxious to correct the notion, that the people of England were suffering anything like the same destitution as that which was experienced in Ireland. The people of Ireland were not consumers of wheat, but of other produce; and as the potato crop had totally failed, want was not only felt in Ireland, but there was absolute destitution. This was a notion which he earnestly desired to correct; for if it were not corrected, it might lead to a relaxation of those efforts which were indispensable to relieve the Irish people from starvation.

Lord BROUGHAM was anxious to explain that he had never entertained the idea that the destitution in England was in any degree equal to that in Ireland. When he made the observation to which his noble Friend referred, he had in his eye Glasgow, Liverpool, and Bristol, the ports on the western coast where a scarcity of corn had been severely felt. The point which he desired to bring under their Lordships' notice was the fact, that while great exertions had been made for the relief of Ireland, nothing like the same effort had been manifested for the poor of Scotland and England. He found no fault with the contributions that had been made for the suffering poor in Ireland. In his opinion, it did the people of this country great honour; for all classes had equally exerted themselves to succour those whom he would call their fellow-countrymen, and among the most active was that amiable, that excellent body, the Society of Friends, who, although only a small community, had contributed the munificent sum of 30,000*l.*

House adjourned.

HOUSE OF COMMONS,

Thursday, February 4, 1847.

Minutes.] New Writ.—For Galway, *v.* Sir Valentine Blake, Bart., deceased.

New Member Sworn.—For Sussex (Western Division), Richard Prime, Esq.

Public Bills.—1° Railways (Ireland).

Petitions Presented. From the Rye Union, and other places, for Repeal or Amendment of Poor Removal Act. —From Ilkeston, and other places, for Alteration of the Law of Settlement. — From Huddersfield, and other places, for Limiting the Hours of Labour in Factories.— From Mohill, for the Adoption of Measures to enable the

Irish Poor to Emigrate.—From Cork, for the Adoption of Measures for the Relief of the Destitute Irish.—From Stirling, against the Proposed Measure for the Reduction of the Duty on Rum.

NEW COLLEGES (IRELAND).

Mr. SMITH O'BRIEN wished to know what course had been adopted for the regulation of the New Colleges in Ireland. The preliminary works were not yet commenced. He believed that there was some difficulty as to the ecclesiastical branch of the subject, and he believed that the noble Lord himself had suggested a mode by which they might be probably terminated. He hoped the noble Lord would have no objection to state what prospect there was of these matters being regulated in such a manner as to give satisfaction to persons of all persuasions?

Lord J. RUSSELL could assure the hon. Gentleman, that very great attention had been paid to the subject. The right hon. Gentleman the Secretary for Ireland had devoted a good deal of time to it. He certainly had hopes that the differences which existed would be removed. He could not then state what these arrangements were, nor when they would be completed. The subject, however, was receiving every attention; and when a final arrangement had been come to, he would be ready to give an answer to the hon. Gentleman.

POOR LAW COMMISSIONERS.

Mr. G. BANKES wished to put a question to the Attorney General, whether he had any objection to produce to the House the opinion which he had given to the Poor Law Commissioners on the subject of the Poor Removal Act of last Session.

The ATTORNEY GENERAL replied, that so far as he was personally concerned, he should have no objection to produce the opinion, if he had it to produce; but, in point of fact, he had it not, nor had he any recollection of it. He might add, that he believed it was not usual, either there or elsewhere, to give to others the opinion of counsel; nor for the person who had given the opinion to produce it. He had no control over the opinion in question, having once parted with it.

Mr. G. BANKES gave notice that he would, to-morrow, move for the opinion given to the Poor Law Commissioners—both the case and opinion.

RAILWAYS (IRELAND).

Lord G. BENTINCK rose and said: Sir, often as I have experienced the undeserved kindness and patience of this House, I never felt that I had so much need of them as on the present occasion, when, for the first time, I am going to introduce a measure in which the interests of my country are deeply concerned. Sir, it is not that I feel any want of confidence in the intrinsic value of the measure which I am going to introduce to the House, for in it I have confidence the most enthusiastic; but it is because I fear, lest through the feebleness of the advocate, a measure which, so far as its value goes, must depend on its practical machinery, and which has had the care and anxious solicitude of men of far superior intellect to mine—a measure which has been prepared by men whose time may be measured by minutes and valued in gold, should suffer from such weak advocacy as mine. Sir, when I say that my right hon. Friend the Lord Mayor of York (Mr. Hudson), and Mr. Robert Stephenson, and last, but not least, Mr. Laing, have patriotically sacrificed their entire time to the preparation of this measure, I think the House will feel with me that there have been the soundest and most powerful understandings applied to the considerations which are connected with railroads in Ireland. But, Sir, whilst I say that my right hon. and learned Friends are entitled to all the praise and all the merit for any good that shall be found in the measure which I am going to introduce to the House, if, on the contrary, there is nothing good in it, and in its principle it is so hostile to the constitution of this country, or in its details so injurious to my own country; if it is so contrary to sound policy, and altogether so bad that it is not entitled even to a hearing in this House; if it deserves to be condemned and altogether rejected, contrary to usual practice, as I am told that it is the intention of Her Majesty's Ministers to attempt to do with it, then I say that for all that is bad in principle and in policy, I alone am responsible; and it is my privilege, as the leader of a great party, to claim for myself the right to incur the exclusive blame and to bear the undivided responsibility of it. It is not my intention to make a very long preface, or to enter into any general discussion as regards the state and condition of Ireland. Suffice it for me that this great fact stares us in the face, that at this moment there are 500,000 able-bodied persons in Ireland living upon the funds of the State; that there are 500,000 able-bodied persons commanded by a staff of 11,587 persons, employed upon works which have been variously described as "works worse than idleness," by the yeomanry of Ulster as "public follies," and by the Inspector of the Government himself, Colonel Douglas, as "works which will answer no other purpose than that of obstructing the public conveyances." Sir, I say that I feel with others that a great calamity is overhanging Ireland; but at the same time I cannot say that I look with any despondency at the present state of affairs. Sir, I do hope that we, who in former times have arisen from difficulties far greater than these, shall not be appalled at a calamity which consists in the loss of property to the value of 10,000,000*l.* sterling; that we, who at one period of the war were expending, upon an average for three years, 103,000,000*l.* sterling a year, will not be downhearted at having to provide for a deficiency and for a disaster that may be estimated at 10,000,000*l.* On the contrary, Sir, I look with confident hope that good will rise out of evil, and that so far from lying down and weeping over our misfortune, like children lost in a wood, we shall have the spirit to look our difficulties fairly in the face, and to be resolved to exercise a firm determination to overcome them. Sir, I cannot forget that England has had her bad days as well as Ireland; that we have known the time when the counties of England have been ravaged by the fires of the incendiary; that we have seen the time in England when the Sovereign dared not go into his own city of London. I cannot forget that in later times, so little while ago as the year 1842, England, though not supporting, as now she and Ireland together are constrained to support, 2,000,000 beings in idleness in the latter country, did support, by her parish rates, 1,427,000 persons; that of these no less than 83,000 adult able-bodied men were actually confined within the walls of the workhouse, and that 407,000 adult able-bodied labourers were sustained by the parish. Well, then, it does seem to me, that, when we come to estimate the condition of Ireland, and compare it with that of England in no very distant times, there is not so great a difference between the present state of Ireland and that of England in the years 1841 and 1842 that we need despair of finding the means to overcome our difficulties. Well, Sir, 1841 and 1842 were years of great distress and of difficulty to England; and what has occurred since to change the face of affairs in this country, and to restore England from a state of distress and poverty to a condition the most prosperous and most affluent that ever was known in the annals of her history? Sir, I am aware that there are some who ascribe all this improvement, and all this prosperity, to the operation of those measures of free trade which were commenced in the year 1842. There are some, I know, who have expressed it as their opinion that the reduction of five-sixteenths of a penny of the duty on cotton, the free introduction of some 27,000 head of foreign cattle, the admission of foreign timber at reduced duties, and last, but not least, the free admission of goose feathers, are the causes of all the prosperity which we now so happily experience; but, I for one, am more disposed to ascribe it to that enterprise—that railway enterprise—which arose about that period of our history. And when I recollect that in the last three or four years something like 13,000,000*l.* sterling a year has been spent in wages to the native industry of this country in the construction of railways, and that for their construction 200,000 able-bodied labourers, receiving upon an average 22*s.* a week, have been called from the parish and the workhouse to execute them, I think that it requires no conjurer to discover that the change which has come over the circumstances of the country arises not from any political changes that have taken place in the commercial policy of the country, but that it has arisen from that mighty enterprise which has given employment to so many people, and at the head of which stood my right hon. Friend the Lord Mayor of York. Sir, I shall not go back to investigate all the recommendations that have been made by the various persons in authority, and by various Committees of this House; but this I think I may venture to say, that there has been no inquiry made by Parliament, in which the result has not been the recommendation that the difficulties of Ireland should be sought to be overcome by stimulating the employment of her people. Sir, in the year 1836 there was a Commission appointed by Her Majesty to inquire into the advantages of railway communication in Ireland. The result of that inquiry was a report from those able Commissioners, recommending that a system of railways in Ireland should be carried out, and that this should be done by assistance of funds from the Government. Sir, I will not travel over the old beaten ground with respect to the reasons which they so ably gave for making this recommendation. I will not repeat to the House the many proofs which they gave of the wonders which easy communication had performed in Ireland, or of the perfect success which had attended every grant made by Parliament for improving roads and communication in Ireland. But, Sir, that report was followed up by another report, which was the report of Lord Devon, and he confirmed all the recommendations of the Railway Commissioners. In his report he pointed to the opening of communications and to assistance by loans from the Government as the best means of finding employment for the people. Well, Sir, this brings me to the existing state of railway enterprise in Ireland. Sir, I find that there have passed Acts of Parliament for 1,523 miles of railway in Ireland, and though some of these Acts have passed so long as eleven years ago, up to this time 123 miles only of railway have been completed, and I think that only 164 miles more are in course of completion in the present year. This must prove to the House that there is some weakness, some debility in Ireland, which prevents them from carrying out those enterprises which, in England and Scotland, have caused the completion already, I believe, of 2,600 miles of railway, and have caused new Acts to be passed for constructing 5,400 miles more—8,000 in the whole. Well, then, Sir, is it that the circumstances of Ireland, that the poverty of Ireland, and the state of her population, make hers a condition that is not likely to prove advantageous to railway speculators? Far from it. By a report, for which I am indebted to Mr. Stephenson, I find that the population of Ireland and the population of England and Wales are as nearly as possible upon a par. In England, it appears, by the last census of 1841, that there is for every two acres and one-fifth of land, one individual of the population; whilst in Ireland the population amounts to one on every two acres and a quarter. And in this comparison, let me tell you that the 7,000,000 acres of waste bog and of water on the surface of Ireland, are taken into consideration. Therefore, if you compare the cultivated acres of England and of Wales with the cultivated acres of Ireland, you would find the balance in favour of Ireland, and that Ireland is more densely inhabited than England and Wales. Now, Sir, perhaps you will tell me "that this may be a very good argument as far as population is concerned; but what is the use of population if they have no money to pay for their conveyance by railways?" Sir, my right hon. Friend who sits beside me (Mr. Hudson), will tell you that in all railway speculations population is held to be the first element of their success; property second; and if you tell me that the population of Ireland is incapable of travelling from want of means, I must answer you with the assertion of this fact, that it is not so; for by a return that I have got here, and for which I am indebted to the industry of Mr. Laing, I find that the number of passengers who travel upon Irish railways, as compared with the number who travel either upon the Scottish or English railroads, is exceedingly greater. The House may be surprised to hear it; but the fact is this, that while upon the Scotch and English railways the average number of passengers who travel is but 11,800 per mile per annum, upon the Ulster Railway the number who travel is no less than 21,790 per mile per annum; and on the Drogheda and Dublin line the number is 18,250 per mile per annum. But, Sir, I am not going to take only these two Irish railroads that have already been completed, and one of which, the Ulster Railway, is looked upon as the London and Birmingham line is regarded in this country; but I will venture to take the bull by the horns, and to contrast the Ulster Railway with our own London and Birmingham, and I find that in the year which has just passed the Ulster Railway and the Dublin and Drogheda Railway, consisting together of fifty-six miles only in length, have carried 1,111,442 passengers against 1,008,000 passengers carried by the London and Birmingham Railway, which measures double the distance. Well then, Sir, I think that if it is to be objected to my plan that the poverty of Ireland, the poverty of her people, will make railroads in Ireland a ruinous speculation, and that it is impossible for England to advance money to Ireland with any just expectation that the debt will be repaid: I say that the practical experience that we have of the few railroads already constructed in Ireland gives a flat denial to any such argument. Then, Sir, I may be asked if this be the case, and if there is this promise of profits in Irish enterprise applied to railways, how is it that private speculators do not come in to the market? Sir, I am unable to answer that question satisfactorily; but the fact is so, that English capital will not come forward to invest itself in Ireland. There is a feeling of distrust towards all Irish speculations, and there is an ignorance of that country in England, which prevents English capitalists from venturing their money in these concerns. And if any proof of this is wanting, I could instance the case of the North British Railway, and compare it with the Great Southern and Western Railway in Ireland. There are already completed of the Great Southern and Western Railway fifty-six miles. That railway is but just completed, is opened only for passenger traffic, and is not open for goods. And there are completed of the North British Railway and its branches seventy-two miles, which are partly open for goods traffic as well as that of passengers. Now the traffic upon the Great Southern and Western (Ireland) amounted in the last week to 1,028*l.* upon the fifty-six miles completed; while upon the North British Railway, which cost 26,300*l.* per mile against 15,000*l.* a mile which the Great Southern and Western (Ireland) cost, the amount of traffic exceeded that of the Great Southern and Western by only 339*l.*, its gross traffic having been 1,367*l.*; and though according to all common sense the Great Southern and Western Railway (Ireland) should be the most profitable concern for speculation, yet such is the feeling in the money market of England, that the worse railway of the two is at 40*l.* premium, while the better railway is at 2*l.* discount; that is to say, the North British is at 40 per cent premium, while the Great Southern and Western (Ireland) at the last sale was, I believe, at 2*l.* discount upon the 50*l.* shares. Well, then, I think I have shown you there is something in fashion, something in confidence, which occasions the unwillingness of English capitalists to vest their capital in Ireland. But if I look to another part of the question, I must remember that many of the railway proprietors in Ireland, are the landlords and tenantry of that country; and the presence of the very calamity which now impoverishes and afflicts Ireland, affords an adequate reason why the local proprietors of Ireland should not be able to meet their calls; and the consequence is, that some of the best speculations in Ireland are now what is commonly called "stuck fast" for want of money. I take the railways in the southern parts of Ireland, and this is the report which we have received from two engineers (Mr. Bidder, jun., and Mr. Smith) who have been travelling in Ireland investigating this question of Irish railroads for us, and they say of the railway from Thurles to Cork, which is sixty miles in length, that it will be commenced as fast as the land and money can be obtained; that the branch to Limerick, which is twenty-five miles in length, will be completed by the time the main line is open to Tipperary, and that that event must depend upon the supply of money; of the Killarney Junction, which is forty miles in length, they say it is advertised, but that there is no money to commence. They say of the Cork and Fermoy line, which is sixteen miles in length, that the works are stopped for want of funds; of the Limerick and Waterford, which is fifty miles in length, that it is stopped also for want of money; also of the Cork and Bandon line, which is sixteen miles long; the Cork and Waterford, which is ninety-seven miles in length; and the Cork line to Passage and Blackrock, which is six and a half miles long; that all these are stopped from the same cause—want of money; making, in those seven counties in the southern parts of Ireland, 290 miles of railway which are stopped from want of money. Of the Dublin and Mullingar line, it is reported that the company are prosecuting their works with vigour, and that they have 3,000 men employed—that is, more than sixty men per mile; but that a great many more would be employed if the company had sufficient funds; so that it is evident the company is disposed to prosecute their works with the greatest vigour. Why is it, then, that they cannot accomplish their works with the quickness they desire? It is because there is a general distrust in the English market respecting Irish lines, which is an effectual bar to their getting money on reasonable terms, and it is my proposition that the Government should come to their aid; and the proposition I have to make to this House is, that for every 100*l.* properly expended upon railways, 200*l.* should be lent by Government, at the very lowest interest at which, on the credit of the Government, that amount can be raised. It may be said that this is lending to the companies at a lower rate of interest than money has been heretofore lent. It may be said, also, and, of course, will be said by opponents of this scheme, that this is insufficient security. But I hope, with the indulgence of the House, to be able before I sit down, to satisfy the House that under the restriction I propose to put upon this proposal, the money so expended will be amply secured. I have long, often consulted anxiously upon this point, with one who is the chairman of companies whose railways extend 1,700 miles in length, and who has the control of 45,000,000*l.*; and he is prepared to pledge his commercial reputation and character to the country, that the State shall not lose one single farthing by the proposition. My right hon. Friend the Lord Mayor of York (Mr. Hudson) will tell you that the worst railway that is under his direction, would afford cent per cent security to Government; and I shall be prepared to show you that of all the railways that ever have been constructed in this country, in Belgium, or in Scotland, the worst would afford ample security to Government. I am speaking, of course, of passenger lines; for the question here is entirely of passenger lines, and not of mineral lines. Well, I have said that my proposition is, that Government is to lend at the interest for which it can be borrowed; and though the interest at present would be 3*l.* 6*s.* 8*d.* per cent, yet I will assume it to be 3½ per cent—that Government is to lend at that interest, and take the security of the whole railway. Consequently, a line paying 7*l.* upon 300*l.* expended, would afford ample security for 200*l.* lent by the State at 3*l.* 10*s.* per cent; and I am, therefore, prepared to prove that a line which paid but a dividend of 2*l.* 6*s.* 8*d.* per cent would afford perfect security for the interest of the loan lent by the Government. But, Sir, I will show you that there is no line that would not do far more than this. The line in the empire of which the gross traffic receipts are the lowest, is that from Arbroath to Forfar. The gross receipts upon that line, which cost 9,000*l.* per mile, were in the first year but 468*l.*, while the cost of working the line was 202*l.* per mile, and yet upon that line, even at that low amount of traffic, the Government would have 3½ per cent interest, leaving 2 per cent over to the shareholders. To show what the Arbroath and Forfar line was, I must tell the House that all the traffic that existed between the two towns previous to the formation of this railway, was of only that amount that it was carried on by one horse and a light cart, which travelled between the two towns three days a week. The population of those towns is only 8,707 and 9,620 respectively, and there are only a few intermediate villages; and yet the number of passengers now carried by the railway amounts to 90,000 a year, or 247 per day, yielding an average amount of receipts of 150*l.* to 200*l.* per week, which was a profit of 5 per cent upon the whole of the expenditure, that being 145,000*l.* Having selected the worst line in the empire, taken, too, in its earliest infancy, and shown that the security to the Government will be sufficient; I have now to show to the House the grounds upon which I conclude that the passing of this measure would have the effect of stimulating English capital, and that it would forthwith set to work English capitalists to complete the railways in Ireland. Before I go on, my right hon. Friend (Mr. Hudson) reminds me that I ought to have stated that this security of 100*l.*, properly expended, for every 200*l.* of loan, is not the only security to be had. We propose to make the Railway Commissioners, of whom you formed last year a board which is responsible to Parliament—to make them a board for the purpose of dealing out these loans to the public. We propose to throw the entire responsibility upon this board; and unless they shall report to the Commissioners of the Treasury that the railway which applies for a loan is likely to be beneficial to the country, and to afford profitable employment, and it offers reasonable and sufficient security to the Government, that the State is not to be called upon, even where the share-capital of the company has been expended, to advance any money to that railway. But I was going on to show in what position my proposition would place the shareholders; and whilst it would be at once clear to the House, that under my proposal a line that pays 4 per cent upon its entire cost—that is to say, 12*l.* upon every 300*l.* laid out—would pay to the share-capitalists 5*l.* interest, after repaying the Government 3*l.* 10*s.* upon every 100*l.* lent; so a line which pays 5 per cent upon the entire cost of the railway, would, after paying 7*l.* interest for the 200*l.* lent by Government, leave 8*l.* for the share-capitalists. While that is clear to the House, I will show to you what effect my proposition would have upon the railways which are now in existence, and are stopped for want of money. I will take a concern, in which the largest number of shareholders are Irish proprietors—the Waterford and Limerick railway. The position of that railway is this; the cost of it was estimated at 750,000*l.*, but a power was given to borrow 250,000*l.* more; and from the experience of all railways constructed in this country and in Scotland, I think I should not be safe unless I estimated the entire cost of that railway at the amount, not of the estimated capital, but also of the loan the company has power to raise; therefore I will assume that this railway shall cost 1,000,000*l.* before it is completed. The company have already expended 324,000*l.* upon the construction of the line, and are now stopped for want of money; the consequence is, that though 27*l.* 10*s.* has been paid up out of each 50*l.* share, these shares are at from 12*l.* to 14*l.* discount, or, in other words, 50 per cent discount; so that, in point of fact, the market value of the 324,000*l.* so expended upon that railway is worth only about 162,000*l.* Now under my proposition it would not be necessary to make any further vain calls upon the shareholders; they would be entitled at once to demand from the Government a loan equal to 648,000*l.*, which would, as nearly as may be, complete the line. What would be the effect of all this? Why, it was estimated that the traffic of the railway would admit of a dividend upon 750,000*l.* of 6¾ per cent; but considering that the true expenditure would be, not 750,000*l.*, but 1,000,000*l.*, it would give 5 per cent as the probable dividend on the whole cost of the railway. But if the Government lent them two-thirds of the required capital at 3½ per cent, the effect would be that upon the 324,000*l.* share-capital already expended, there would be a fair and early prospect of 8 per cent dividend being divided; and the simultaneous effect would be that the shares of that company, instead of being dead in the market, and at a discount of 162,000*l.*, would instantly rise to a considerable premium, and the landed proprietors and the tenantry of Ireland, now unable to meet their calls, would be enabled to get rid of their shares at a premium, and employ the money so obtained in the improvement of their estates and of their farms, thus giving fresh employment to the poor of Ireland. Thus my proposition would have a doubly beneficial effect: it would instantly set to work a great number of persons, and it would enable the landed proprietors who are now shareholders in the concern to make use of their money for the improvement of their estates and the employment of the people. This line, which is a most important one, passes through three baronies in the county of Tipperary, and one in Kilkenny; and in a letter which I have received from the Earl of Glengall, his Lordship informs me they are prepared to set at work 60,000 men in the counties of Kilkenny, Limerick, and Waterford; and that those four baronies which I have mentioned have been paying 4,000*l.* apiece for some months since in employment upon these public works, with every prospect of those demands being continued upon them for the next eight months; and all this expended upon those useless works of which the only results are to spoil the roads and obstruct the public conveyances. Sir, I may be told that within these three or four days some magic influence has come over Her Majesty's Government, and induced them to allow money for the earth-works on this Waterford and Limerick Railway to be advanced upon the security of the baronial sessions' presentments. But I think this is a clumsy and cumbrous way, and one not altogether just, for it is not just that the land should be burdened for the support of the railways. I think it is much simpler that the loan should be made directly to the railways, and not upon the security of the land. This process of lending to the railway through the instrumentality of the land is a proposal that was made to this House in the year, I think, 1839; and though when it was first proposed it was carried by a majority, yet the Ministry of that time foresaw that it could not be carried, and finally abandoned it. It is utterly impossible to assess upon the landowners any rate by which they can be called upon to contribute in any fair ratio to the maintenance of railways. The land which is close to a first-class station may be increased in value 1,000 per cent, while the property abutting upon the old channels of communication may actually suffer depreciation. Therefore, my idea is, that these advances should be made in a plain and simple way at once to the railways themselves. And, Sir, when I am on the subject of these railways in the southern districts of Ireland, I have not only to tell you that this one company (the Waterford and Limerick) are prepared to employ 16,000 men on these works, but I will take the liberty of reading to the House an application made by the chairman of the Southern and Western Railway to Government last May upon the same subject. On the 22nd of May, last year, Mr. George Carr, chairman of the Great Southern and Western Railway, addressed this letter to Sir R. Peel:—

> "I have consulted the principal contractors on our line, and I find that, in case we had at once a sum of 500,000*l*., they would undertake to give immediate employment to many thousands in distress, now destitute and unemployed. By a simultaneous action the employment would be distributed judiciously along the greater part of the line; and, the wages being paid in cash, and with the most scrupulous regularity, the disbursement of such a considerable sum through the labouring classes must alleviate, if not entirely remove, all apprehensions of suffering from want and idleness."

Again he says—

> "The Government has now an opportunity of affording the greatest extent of relief, with the certainty of a punctual repayment of every shilling borrowed."

And he encloses a copy of a letter that he himself had addressed, through their Secretary, Mr. Brickwood, to the Exchequer Loan Commissioners in Ireland. In that letter he tells them that—

> "The whole line is a trifle short of 200 miles in length; that the dense population of the towns along the line—Thurles, Templemore, Tipperary—has long been notorious for its turbulent and discontented character, now aggravated by famine."

He justly says—

> "There appears no way of averting the impending calamity, but by giving full and active employment to the peasantry."

And he adds—

> "This most desirable object the railway company confidently undertake to effect. All the works at this stage are of that description that can be executed by the ordinary labour of the country; and, with a certainty of obtaining the aid now sought, I may safely assert, that 50,000 poor fellows, now starving and idle, will be placed in a condition to earn such wages as will render them and their wretched families comfortable and independent during the two most trying months of the year, July and August, when the old crop is exhausted, and the new not ripe."

Now can any one for a moment reflect on this offer by the Great Southern and Western Railway Company thus to employ 50,000 labourers, and not come to the opinion that true wisdom and true economy were concerned in making the required loan of 500,000*l*. to them? I ask whether the effect would not have been, so far at least as those counties through which these railways would pass were concerned, that England would not have been called upon to pay one-half the expense of their presentments for the maintenance of their poor? Sir, in addition to these communications, we have one from Mr. Dargan, the great contractor, in Ireland, who has contracted for 300 miles of railway there, and who says that he is stopped, as regards 102 miles, partly from being unable to get possession of the land, and partly from want of money; but that if he were at liberty to proceed, he would the next day put in employment 30,000 men upon these 102 miles. It may, however, be said that my proposal will only affect those counties through which these railways pass; but I beg leave to tell the House, that of the 1,340 miles of railway for which Bills were passed in 1845 and 1846, and those previously passed, the result is, that there are but four counties in Ireland that would not be traversed by railway. These are, I think, the counties of Mayo, Sligo, Roscommon, and Galway; but there are already in Parliament Bills for an extension railway from Athlone to Galway, with an extension to Mayo, which will traverse the end of Roscommon, and go through the centre of Galway, and which those intelligent men, Mr. Bidder and Mr. Smith, employed by Mr. Stephenson, assure us is the line of all others of the greatest importance to the welfare of the country, and would certainly pay 5 per cent. Sir, there cannot be a doubt, if this measure were to pass, that another branch, the Great Midland and Western Railway, from Longford to Sligo, would also be carried out, passing through the iron and coal mines of Sligo, and thereby opening to us iron which, according to the report of the Railway Commissioners in 1837, is of the finest description—of the richest and most brilliant ore, with excellent coal for smelting purposes, as well as limestone quarries at hand, but which cannot be worked successfully for want of railway communication. Another line, for which I think a Bill is now before Parliament, would be carried out also to Cavan; and then there would not be a single county in Ireland which would not be traversed by railways. There have already passed Acts of Parliament empowering railway companies to complete 1,522 miles of railway; there are before the House, at the present moment, Bills for 150 miles more; and there are lines from Limerick to Tarbert, a branch to Castlebar, a branch to Roscommon, a branch to Loughrea, a branch to Ennis, and others which will certainly be made if this Bill passes, and railway speculators are thus assured of assistance by the Government. These lines, in length 268 miles more, make altogether

1,970 miles; of which 123 are completed, and 164 in progress, leaving somewhere about 200 miles of margin for railways which might be disallowed by the Railway Commissioners. Now, Sir, in introducing this measure to the House, it has not been my wish to bring forward any proposition either of hostility or rivalry to the Government of my noble Friend. I have assured the House publicly and privately — I have pledged my honour to my noble Friend, the First Minister—that I seek no advantage from the carrying of this measure; and that it is my anxious hope that we may come to the consideration of it as if it were a great private Bill, and we were all selected members of the Committee to inquire into its worth. With regard to the measure itself, though the idea of it originated so far back as September, at the house of my hon. Friend Sir J. Tyrell; and though the Bill was drawn so far back as November last, yet until I had given notice of the measure in this House, with the exception of my hon. Friend the Member for Harwich (Major Beresford), who enjoys our full confidence, we had studiously avoided communicating our secret either to any Irish Member, or to any English or Scotch Gentleman connected with Irish railways or with Irish property. We thought, as it was a measure which called upon England for a large advance of money, it would be more becoming that no jury should sit upon it but one consisting exclusively of English Members; and I therefore trust the Irish Gentlemen will not think that we exercised any discourteous discretion when we forbore to consult them before introducing this measure to the House. I felt, amongst other considerations, that there were those out of doors who were disposed to raise a clamour against every proposition for assistance coming from Ireland; and that it would be more consistent with the dignity of the Irish Gentlemen, and with their true interest, that this measure should be above the suspicion of being what is called an Irish job. It may be said that this proposition is one more favourable to Irish railroads and Irish proprietors, than that which they have themselves proposed. My Friends have considered, with me, their proposition, and on the best consideration we could give to it, we came to the opinion that the measures proposed by the Irish Gentlemen themselves, though they might have the effect of completing, after some delay, the best lines, would not have the effect chiefly desired; and that is, to stimulate and promote the profitable and immediate employment of the people on a great scale. My right hon. Friend, who has never undertaken any railway enterprise that has not ended in success, and who is perhaps the best judge of this matter, was of opinion that although such encouragement as the Irish Gentlemen asked might in the course of a few years, and by slow degrees, cause railway enterprise to be carried out in Ireland, yet it would not have the effect of immediately stimulating the execution of them. Without this, half our purpose would be lost. In this, then consists the grand distinction between our plan and that of the Irish noblemen and gentlemen. The great question now arises, and it is this: How many men can you, by your scheme, find employment for? We know by experience—at least I know by information received from Mr. Stephenson, the engineer of the line—that the London and Birmingham railway employed 100 men per mile in its construction for four consecutive years. The London and Birmingham line, however, was one far more expensive in its works than the Irish lines, of which the outside average cost is estimated at 16,000*l.* per mile. The estimate of Mr. Stephenson is, that, taking one line with another throughout Ireland, to execute the whole of them would require the services of sixty men per mile for four consecutive years. Sixty men per mile for 1,500 miles would give constant employment for four consecutive years to 90,000 men on the earthworks and line alone; but it is estimated that the employment given to quarrymen, artificers, and others, not actually engaged on the line of road, would occupy six men per mile for the whole number of miles under construction. This would give 9,000 men more; to which is to be added—that which experience teaches is the fact—that when a new railway passes through a country, the new fences to be made, the fields to be squared, the new drains and watercourses to be cut, and the new roads to be constructed, also occupy at least six men per mile, which will give 9,000 men more, making altogether a total number of 108,000 men. But there are other miscellaneous employments to which the expenditure of so large a sum of money necessarily gives rise, and it is thought to be putting the number very low when we estimate the able-bodied men required to be employed at high wages, in order to accomplish 1,500 miles of railway in Ireland at 110,000, representing, with their families, 550,000 persons. Then, Sir, if, as I have shown, without cost to this country, and in the end adding greatly to the wealth of this country, we could, by such a measure as this, for four consecutive years, feed, by means of good wages to the heads of families, 550,000 of the population of Ireland, it must be admitted that we should go a great way in assisting my noble Friend to carry out his new Poor Law Amendment scheme for Ireland. But by this proposition we expect not only to be able to give subsistence to 550,000 persons, but we seek to provide also for the comforts of these poor people in the course of their employment. We have not forgotten the interests of the labourers: following out the recommendation of the report of the Railway Labourers' Committee, we have inserted in our Bill clauses obliging the companies to see that their contractors pay the wages of the labourers once a week, and that in hard cash. We have provided that if the contractor or subcontractor fail to do so from Saturday to Monday, there shall be a summary process against either at the choice of the labourer, and that he shall be obliged to pay double the amount of wages for every day's delay. But this is not the only point in which we consider the interests of the railway labourer, and this suggestion comes from my hon. Friend, Mr. Stephenson. It is, that the companies shall be required, on the demand of the Railway Commissioners, to construct decent and suitable dwellings for the labourers before they commence their works. Nothing can be stronger than the language used in the report which lies on the Table on this point. It states truly, that it is in vain to think of improving the morals of the people, except you begin by improving their social condition. In practice, however, it has been found that railway labourers have been generally crowded into dwellings and put in places not fit for pigs. Some may think this measure an interference with free trade in the construction of railways; but I understand, from all the best contractors in the kingdom, that it is cheaper to them in the end to consult the convenience and comforts of their labourers. Experience teaches that if a man is uncomfortable at home, he will go to the public house, and that where the labourers cannot be comfortably provided for, and have no opportunities for bringing their wives with them, they will get tired of their work, and desert it altogether. But, Sir, there is also another advantage attending this arrangement, and it is this—that it will afford to the poor-law guardians in Ireland additional means of providing for the labourers in their own parishes who may be out of employment. It might be in vain, without this provision, for the poor-law guardians to say to an idle labourer who asked for relief, that he might get employment on a railway thirty or forty miles off; for his answer might fairly be, "Where are my wife and family to live?" But now I think that with justice, and mercy, too, it will be in the power of every poor-law guardian to say, "Here is an order for a spade, a pick-axe, or a shovel, on this or that railway where they want men; go there and you will get employment, and will find a decent dwelling too; get you gone, you have no longer a claim for relief upon us." I therefore think, Sir, that we shall thus furnish my noble Friend with great facilities for carrying out his Poor Law Amendment Act, greatly assisting the workhouse test. Sir, I will now come to consider what will be the effect upon Ireland of the construction of railways in that country; and in doing so I think I may appeal to the testimony of Mr. Smith of Deanston, as to that of an able as well as an impartial witness. The House will, no doubt, expect to hear, if Mr. Smith of Deanston is asked what measure of all others would be the one most calculated to improve the condition of Ireland, that his answer would be, "drain the bogs." Mr. Smith, however, being asked before a Committee of this House what measure he would adopt for such a purpose, replied at once, "Advance the construction of railways, and then agricultural improvement will speedily follow." Mr. Smith of Deanston was then asked what would be the value of railways to an agricultural population—that being the gist of the examination by the hon. Member for Montrose, who put the question—and he answered—

> "That the improvement of the land for one mile only on each side of the railway so constructed would be so great that it would pay the cost of the whole construction."

These were his words—

> "I think it will ultimately prove to be a most important benefit to that country. In my opinion

there are few districts in which railway communication could be introduced, where the value of the country through which the railway passed would not be raised to an extent equal to the whole cost of the railway."

Arguing on an area of 640 acres for every square mile, after deducting the land occupied by fences, roads, and buildings, he entered into a calculation of the gain derivable from the mere carriage of the produce of the land, and the back carriage of manure, coals, tiles, bricks, &c., and estimates the saving through those means on every square mile to amount to 307*l.* 2*s.* 6*d.*, or 614*l.* 5*s.* a year on 1,280 acres, abutting each mile of railway, this being the difference of the cost of carriage under the old mode of conveyance as compared with the new. Following up this calculation, he says ten miles of railway at twenty years' purchase would give 1,220,850*l.*; carrying it on to fifteen miles, it will be seen, he says, that 1,500 miles of railway will improve the land through which it passes to the extent of 1,920,000 acres, at the rate of a mile on each side. This, taken at twenty-five years' purchase, will equal 23,033,625*l.* sterling in the permanent improvement of the land of Ireland. But he says, "I'll give you a practical proof by referring to the case of the Edinburgh and Glasgow Railway." He says the land through which the Edinburgh and Glasgow Railway passes was let on an average at 5*s.* per acre previous to the construction of that line; and now it is let at from 30*s.* to 40*s.* the acre. Take, Sir, however, not 25*s.* or 30*s.* as the annual improvement, but 10*s.* per acre as the amount of the improvement of the land in Ireland through which these railways will pass, and then calculate the increased value of 1,920,000 acres. The House will find that it equals a capital of 24,000,000*l.* sterling. The effect, therefore, of carrying out the system of railway construction in Ireland, would be to add 23,000,000*l.* or 24,000,000*l.* sterling to the value of the land in that country. But, Sir, the only advantage of the plan does not consist in this. When you employed the labour of Ireland on those works of idleness which you began last winter, and continue to this day—when you employed 83,000 men so far back as last July upon 3,809 miles of road, you spoiled the old lines of communication through the country; and when you made new ones, you diminished the quantity of land available for the production of corn and food in general by so much. You also permanently burdened the country less for their repair and maintenance. Far different, however, is my scheme. I purpose to relieve the country of a cess for the maintenance of 550,000 people at unproductive labour—of people practically in a state of idleness, with one hand; while, with the other, I do not oppress you with any equivalent charge by way of compensation. The land on which the 1,500 miles of railway stand will occupy 15,000 acres, and will pay poor-rate in each parish through which the railway passes. Now, Sir, the average charge for the poor rate on the English lines amounts to one and a half per cent on the gross traffic; I assume the gross traffic on the Irish lines to be, on the average, 1,000*l.* per mile. On all the English and Scotch railroads now in operation, the average amount of the gross traffic is 3,500*l.* per mile. But I take the traffic of Ireland to be equal to two-sevenths of the traffic of the English lines for my present purpose: this would give 15*l.* per mile, occupying ten acres of land, that is, 30*s.* an acre poor rate on 15,000 acres, amounting to 22,500*l.* a year. Of all the railways opened in Ireland up to this point of time, none have paid so little as 1,000*l.* gross traffic per mile; on the contrary, those which three years ago only paid 950*l.* per mile, now pay 1,600*l.* I therefore leave it to you, Sir, to say whether I am overstating the case. I ought now to explain to the House what, in my opinion, will be the effect of this proposition. A gross traffic of 622*l.* per mile, after deducting the cost of working the line, would exactly pay the Government interest, leaving nothing for the shareholders. The ordinary estimate of the cost of working a line is 40 per cent on the gross traffic; the first year of its being in operation the Arbroath and Forfar Railway was worked at the low cost of 202*l.* per mile; the greater the traffic, the greater, of course, is the cost as well as the gain, there being a greater necessity for increased plant within certain limits. Well, then, Sir, this is the calculation I have made; taking 1,600*l.* a mile as the average cost of calculation—the Arbroath and Forfar Railway cost, as I have stated, only 9,000*l.* per mile—but taking 16,000*l.* per mile as the average cost of construction of all the railways in Ireland, it will stand as follows:—

Traffic per Mile per Annum, required to pay the following Dividends, supposing Railway to cost 16,000*l.* per mile, and to be worked at 40 per cent. cost.	Interest on Two-thirds of the Capital advanced by Government at 3½ per cent.	Dividend on One-third Share Capital.
£.		
622	3½	0
711	3½	1
800	3½	2
888	3½	3
978	3½	4
1066	3½	5
1154	3½	6
1245	3½	7
1333	3½	8
1412	3½	9
1501	3½	10

This, Sir, would at once call forth the capital of the country; and there cannot be a doubt that, that if a Bill were passed this Session to the effect that I have suggested, there would be enough capital subscribed within a week to construct all the lines of railway sanctioned by the Legislature for Ireland. And thus, Sir, you would not only have 110,000 labourers employed upon productive works, but you would have, under the present circumstances of the country, the promoters of these undertakings pressing on the works for the purpose of availing themselves of the present redundancy of the labour market, and I cannot doubt but that above 200,000 labourers would be instantaneously employed. But, Sir, I have not as yet detailed all the advantages of this measure. The land to be bought—say 1,500 miles, at the rate of ten acres per mile—for the construction of these railways, would give 1,500,000*l.* for the purchase-money. The land for the railways already constructed, cost, on the average, 170*l.* per acre; so that the House will perceive I do not exaggerate my statements. Of this sum 20*l.* per acre will have to be paid for tenant rights to those in occupation of the land; and assuming the land to have been purchased already on 300 miles, 1,250,000*l.* will remain to be paid to the landlords for their property. At 170*l.* per acre, the sum will be equal to 2,040,000*l.*, of which 240,000*l.* would be divided among the occupying tenants, in number, probably, amounting at least to the number of acres entered upon. These large sums would be thus put at the disposal of the landlords and the occupying tenants; and would be expended by them on the improvement of their land, and the employment of the people of Ireland. I now come, Sir, to the bearing of this measure upon the public revenue. I hear it whispered about that to raise the 16,000,000*l.* of money, which is my proposition, on the security of 8,000,000*l.* for the completion of 1,500 miles of railway in Ireland, would knock down the money market, and put the screw on the commerce and trade of this country. That, Sir, however, I do not believe. I cannot conceive that to raise a sum of 16,000,000*l.*, spread over four years, at the rate of 1,000,000*l.* for every three months, would have any, the slightest, effect upon the money market, or upon the commerce of this country. Sir, I have consulted several experienced persons upon the subject—persons of great ability as well as great experience—among others, the hon. Member for Westmorland, a Director of the Bank of England (Mr. Alderman Thompson), and I shall tell you shortly what is their opinion as to the effect of such a proceeding—it is that it would have no appreciable influence upon either. But, Sir, have we no experience in our own knowledge on this subject? Did we not in 1835 raise a sum of 15,000,000*l.* to pay the slave compensation money; and what was the effect of that proceeding upon the public funds of the country? Did it kick them down, as it has been objected to my plan, or screw up the trade and commerce of the country? Quite the contrary, as the House will perceive from the following facts: The Slave Compensation Act, 3 & 4 William IV., cap. 73, received the Royal Assent August 28, 1833. The average price of Consols at that period was 89*l.* The loan of 15,000,000*l.* was contracted for on the 8th August, 1835. The contractors were to receive for every 100*l.* subscribed 75*l.* Consols, 25*l.* Reduced, 13*s.* 7*d.* Long Annuities, which would make the price as follows: Consols, 88*l.* 13*s.* 4*d.*, Reduced, 90*l.*, Long Annuities, 16*s.* 4*d.* The average prices on the day of contract were—Consols, 90*l.* 2*s.* 6*d.*, Reduced, 90*l.* 12*s.* 6*d.*, Long Annuities, 16*s.* 4*d.* During the whole of the year following this contract the price of Consols averaged about 91*l.*, and the premium on the loan ranged from 2⅞*l.* to 4¼*l.* So that the contract price for that loan was taken on the whole at an average premium of 1*l.* 4*s.* 6*d.* for the 15,000,000*l.* Did that kick down the funds, or screw up trade and commerce? Far from it; it had no perceptible effect whatever upon the market then or thereafter. If this was the effect upon that occasion, were there any grounds for alarm even to the most timid on the present? But even if we had not this experience of the loan of 15,000,000*l.* for the slavery compensation payment, I should have felt the fullest confidence that the money would be raised, seeing that it is to be spent in the country, not out of it. Money spent on productive labour, and in the promotion of native industry, is not likely to depress the public funds of this country; that, Sir, I believe every person will admit. Lord Bacon says that "money is like muck: the more it is spread the more it fructifies;" which is true, so it be money spent upon national and productive enterprise. Send money out of the country, however, as you have done—to the extent of 70,000,000*l.* a year—for the purpose of supporting a foreign war, the whole of that sum to be spent abroad, and you will unquestionably oppress the money market, and injure the trade of the country. Send money out of the country as you did in 1825—invest 7,000,000*l.* and upwards, as you did on that occasion, in Peruvian and Mexican silver mines—sink your capital, as you did then, in Bolanos (silver), in Bolivar (copper and scrip), in Cata Branca, in Conceiçao, in Caudonga (gold), in Cobre (copper), in Colombian, in Copaiba, and in no less than twenty-three different foreign mining companies, which the speculators of this country took in hand because they had no railways to make, and then when your gold goes, never to come back to you, of course the funds will go down, and trade and commerce will be correspondingly paralysed. Send 13,000,000*l.* to Portugal, and 22,000,000*l.* to Spain, to be swallowed up in Spanish Actives and Spanish Passives, and Spanish Deferred, and the funds will fall of course. Send, as you did in 1836, millions to Ohio for the construction of canals, and millions to Pennsylvania, Illinois, and Virginia for the same purpose, to be invested in bonds of these and the other States, the borrowers of which sums set out with the determination to turn public swindlers, and the funds will certainly fall, and trade and commerce be distressed. Spend 100,000,000*l.* in this manner, and it will lead to commercial distress; but it will be otherwise when you come to spend your 100,000,000*l.* on the employment of your own distressed people in productive labour. And if the money is applied to works in this country, just judge of the good effect that will be produced by looking at the way my right hon. Friend the Lord Mayor of York has extended the enterprise of the country; and mark the fact, that while he has enriched himself and the companies, he has added still more to the happiness and prosperity of the people. But, Sir, I beg leave to say that whilst I am calling on the country to lend to Ireland 16,000,000*l.* sterling at such an interest as we can borrow the money at, without any charge for expenses of any kind, I must at the same time beg leave to state that when the Chancellor of the Exchequer lends this money to Ireland—when he advances a loan to be employed on public works—he does not stand in the same position with the private capitalist. The private capitalist is restricted to the bare interest for what he advances, and he has no profit beyond this; but this is not the case with the State lender; when we look back at the last four years, and reflect on what the expenditure of 13,000,000*l.* in railroad enterprise has done to increase the revenue, by an increase of customs and excise duties—the enormous consumption of beer, of malt, and of spirits; of tea and tobacco; all of which are articles of peculiar consumption to the railway labourer—you must be of opinion with me that, indirectly, the State will be a sleeping partner in the concern; that while the State lends really nothing but its credit and its name, it will reap from the expenditure—not of 16,000,000*l.* only, but 16,000,000*l.* lent by the Government with 8,000,000*l.* share-capital added, making in the whole 24,000,000*l.* in Ireland—an enormous amount of increased revenue. We have it stated by Messrs. Grissell and Peto, who are constantly employing 9,000 labouring men on English railways, that in order to promote habits of sobriety, it was thought advisable to restrict each man to one gallon of strong beer a day. Now, a gallon of strong beer brewed from malt and hops, pays 4*d.* duty; so that each railway labourer, setting aside what his family consumed, and what he pays on the other articles, such as tea, tobacco, and sugar, actually pays the sum of 5*l.* 0*s.* 4*d.* per year in excise on beer alone. Let us see, then, how this calculation may be worked out. On looking at and comparing the amount of excise paid by the Irish people, with the amount of excise paid by the Scotch, we find that the Scotch, in the excise duty alone, paid 1*l.* 0*s.* 2*d.* per head on the whole population; whilst in Ireland the amount was only 3*s.* 10¾*d.* per head. This, after excluding and deducting the soap and brick duties, not paid in Ireland, showed a difference in the amount of excise duties paid by Irish and Scotch of 16*s.* 3¼*d.* per head. Now, Sir, I am not going to say that this calculation would be entirely correct, as regards the entire population of Ireland; it was, however, made by Mr. Stanley, of the Board of Works, about ten years ago; nor do I mean to state that the effect of making 1,500 miles of railway will be to raise the entire population of Ireland up to the level of the population in Scotland. But I think I may say, and not overcharge the case, that that population of 550,000, represented by 110,000 labourers, will be raised to the average level of all Scotland. If, then, we calculate what 16*s.* 3¼*d.* per head will come to on 550,000 persons, we shall find an additional yearly amount to the revenue to the extent of 447,448*l.*, and this at 3½ per cent interest will represent a capital of 12,784,000*l.* Well, then, there are the customs' duties; and I think when we are constructing railways, it will not be unfair to assume that the customs will be as much increased as the excise. I am aware there is a great difficulty in getting at the exact amount of customs' duties paid by Ireland and Scotland, so large a portion of those duties being received in this country; but from an estimate made, not by myself, but either by Mr. Porter or Mr. M'Gregor, in official finance accounts, I find the gross amount of customs in Ireland shows an average of 5*s.* 8*d.* per head, Scotland 13*s.*, making a difference between Ireland and Scotland of 7*s.* 4*d.* per head. This difference would represent a sum of 202,000*l.* a year, representing, at 3½ per cent interest, a capital of nearly 6,000,000 sterling. If it were fair to calculate on this employment continuing after the railways were completed and in full vigour, it would be right for me to say there would be an increase of revenue to the State for ever of no less than 649,000*l.* per year, representing a capital of more than 18,000,000*l.* sterling. But taking the amount even at half, the result will give you a capital of 9,000,000*l.*; or, at one-third, it would still represent a capital of above 6,000,000*l.* Now, Sir, there would be good grounds for thinking that the execution of 1,500 miles of railway will employ as many people hereafter as when in the course of construction. It is admitted by all those who have a practical knowledge of the subject, that the working of the railways when opened will absorb a great portion of the railway labourers employed in their construction. It is a fact, that ten men per mile are required on the permanent way, and for the maintenance and repair of the engines and the plant of the railway. There will also be many men required as artificers, engine-makers, and coachmakers, to attend to the construction of the new engines, carriages, and trucks, continually required to recruit the old plant—indeed, not fewer than six men per mile will be required on this account; together with those for whom new occupations will be created all along the new lines; so here are sixteen men per mile, at the least, that will be absorbed. We may further look at what railways have done in this country. Look at the towns that have grown up on the South Western Railway, Kingston-on-Thames for instance. But, look still more at what has been done elsewhere, at the southern terminus of that line, at the docks and buildings, which have grown up at Southampton. We can easily imagine that the South Western Railway has absorbed labourers at the rate of sixty men per mile: why should not the Irish lines when made absorb a like number? If I look at the English railways, I see towns have grown up, and improvements have been made on every side; and will not this be peculiarly the case in Ireland? I take, for instance, the railway to Valentia Harbour. We have the evidence of Mr. Walker, the Admiralty engineer, to this effect, "that sooner or later Valentia Harbour must be the American packet station for the whole of the empire." We have the testimony of the late Lord Liverpool to the same effect. The late Lord Liverpool said, in 1826, "that Valentia Harbour must eventually become the point of departure for all Europe for the Western hemisphere;" and who could doubt, if 195 miles of railway were constructed in that direction, that the workmen originally employed in constructing the railway, would forthwith be called upon to raise the houses, towns and docks, the construction of which would necessarily follow. Take another division of the country — open the road to the Sligo mines by means of a railway, and the result will be that a mining population will grow up like the mining population of Staffordshire and Wales. And while I take the lowest estimate of increased revenue — namely, 215,000*l.* a year, or thereabouts, representing a capital of 6,000,000*l.*—I think I offer to the country a plan which not only will give ample security for all the moneys advanced or guaranteed, but which will, by the indirect profit that must be afforded, give an immense increase to the revenue of the State, and add to the capital of the country. Sir, it may be said, as it has been said by some, if Irish enterprise cannot help itself, or walk without crutches, Irish enterprise must be allowed to fall. This is not my opinion, or the opinion of my Friends. I beg leave to say, in answer to this, that I have received this day a message from Mr. Moss, one of the earliest promoters of the Manchester and Liverpool Railway, to this effect—

> "If it had not been for a loan of 100,000*l.* advanced by the Government of that day, he doubted whether the Manchester and Liverpool Railway would ever have been made."

Well, Sir, but there will be another argument used against my proposal for a loan; it has been used, not in this House, but elsewhere, that a loan made to Irish landlords and Irish interests will never be repaid. Sir, grosser injustice and grosser ignorance of history was never displayed than is displayed by those who make such unfounded statements. True, it may be, that when a million sterling was advanced to pay the tithes due to the Protestant clergy of Ireland, that loan was never repaid; but the religious feelings of the great majority of the people were concerned and affected in that matter. But, on the other hand, we have the authority of Lord Devon, that, as regards loans to Ireland, so far from those loans not being repaid, the truth is, it has been the custom of England to lend her money to Ireland at usurious interest; and, out of the profit made by the usurious interest on loans, Ireland has repaid one-third, or, I may say, two thirds, of all "THE GRANTS," as well as the loans, made to her. But, with regard to the good faith of the Irish people, there are repudiators in America, but none in Ireland. A circumstance has come to my knowledge in support of this fact, which I will relate. The Agricultural Bank of Ireland, which had its head-quarters at Cork, failed; and when its affairs were wound up, it was found there was about 900,000*l.* out at interest on notes, the joint notes of two tenants, or of a tenant and his landlord; and the greater part of this amount was for sums not exceeding 20*l.* When the affairs were wound up, such was the good faith, the honesty, of the people who gave these notes, that hardly a shilling was lost. Another instance of the good faith of a still lower class in Ireland I have from Mr. Prosser, an engineer. Mr. Prosser is an Englishman, and two or three years ago had in his employment between 3,000 and 4,000 men. He says, when he first commenced, it was necessary, if an Englishman was employed, to have two policemen to attend and protect him. He wished to work a sawing machine to cut wood, for the purpose of constructing wooden rails for a wooden railway on which he was engaged. At first, there was a disposition on the part of the people to use violence towards his sawyers. He soon found, however, that with the Irish rioters he had only to speak kindly, and to reason with them, and to reason and kindness they speedily listened; and being satisfied he was come not to injure, but to employ and benefit them, they quickly sought his service. These poor fellows, so Mr. Prosser informed me, upon their first appearance, proved to be pretty much in the condition of "Brian O'Linn," who, as the old ballad runs, as you know, Sir, "had no breeches to wear;" yet very soon they learned to like and to appreciate the Englishman's comforts, and, instead of working only three or four days a week, as at first, they soon desired to work hard every day of the week; and next they got to ask for little loans of 20*s.* or 30*s.* to purchase clothes, that they might go to church decently, and improve the furniture of their cabins. Mr. Prosser assured me he never refused them, and that in no one instance was a breach of faith committed by these men towards him. Every farthing of the loans was honestly worked out and repaid. And, therefore, when it is said out of doors, that we shall not be repaid if we lend the Irish people our money, I say, here is a complete refutation of the charge; and that the charge is a scandalous calumny upon an honest people and an entire nation. I will now say how I propose the repayment of the loans to take place. It was originally my intention that the repayment should commence seven years after the railway had been in operation, and that the whole sum advanced should be repaid by instalments in the course of twenty years; for I held, and still hold, that a debt on which full interest and some profit is made, is no debt at all to the State; and, in my opinion, it would not matter how long the repayment of the loan was deferred. But, on consulting the moneyed interest on the subject, I was told that repayment by instalments would make such confusion in the dividends of the railways, that common persons who held shares would not be able to tell how they stood, and would not be able to calculate and understand to what dividend they would be from year to year entitled. As it appeared, therefore, to be desirable to name a definite period in which the whole sum advanced should be paid, I decided at once to name thirty years. We have put that period in the Bill. Sir, I have heard it said, at different times, that there is a danger of an outbreak in Ireland. We have heard this story a thousand times repeated, and as often refuted, "that the starving peasantry of Ireland are purchasing arms with which to commence an outbreak in that country." Sir, I do not believe one word of any such representation. I can only express my great surprise, that with a people starving by thousands—with such accounts as we have read during the last two days—of ten dead bodies out of eleven found lying unburied in one cabin; of seven putrid corpses in another; of dogs and swine quarrelling over and fighting for the dead carcases of Christians; of the poor, consigned coffinless to their graves, and denied the decencies of Christian burial, that the price of the coffin saved might prolong, for a few days, the sufferings of the dying—I, Sir, for one, look with amazement at the patience of the Irish people. I see it not in my own country; we see it not in France. We have heard of seven villages in France burned by the peasantry in the course of last autumn; and, seeing this, I think, with regard to the Irish people, we ought to look with admiration on the patience they have displayed. Talk of discontent—talk of sedition—talk of outbreaks—let me, I say, which I will do if this Bill is allowed to pass, fill the starving bellies of the Irish peasantry with good beef and good mutton—with good wheaten bread and good strong beer; and their pockets with English gold, wherewithal to purchase for themselves the blankets and broad cloths of Yorkshire and of Wiltshire, and the fustians of Manchester; and, for their wives and their daughters the printed cottons of Stockport; and may be the ribbons of Coventry; and I, the Saxon, with my Lead will answer for the loyalty and the honour of the Irish people. Yes, Sir, I, the Saxon, will lead them through their wants fulfilled, their wishes gratified, their warm sympathies and grateful hearts not to sever, but to cement, the union with England. Sir, I have now done; and it only remains for me to thank the House, with my whole heart for the unmerited kindness, patience, and indulgence with which they have for the hundredth time listened to me. I move, Sir—

> "That leave be given to bring in a Bill for the prompt and profitable Employment of the People, by the encouragement of Railroads in Ireland."

Lord J. RUSSELL said: Sir, I can have no hesitation in offering my tribute to the patriotic feeling which has induced my noble Friend to bring forward this Motion—to the ability which he has displayed, both in forming his plan, and explaining it to the House—to the zeal which he has shown for the benefit of the people of Ireland, and on behalf of that sympathy which, as he truly asserts, must be the best cement of the union of the two kingdoms. Sir, while I do not hesitate to pay that tribute to my noble Friend, I wish that his plan had been such that I could have at once agreed to his proposition, and adopted it in aid of the measures which have been brought forward by Her Majesty's Government on behalf of Ireland; because I can assure my noble Friend that I entirely believe in the sincerity with which he asserted that his plan was intended to aid and assist, and not to hinder Her Majesty's Government; and entirely believing in that sincerity, no absurd or petty feeling on my part, that the plan was not originally proposed by Her Majesty's Government, but by a member of a different party, would induce me to refrain from adopting it. Sir, this matter, though not the plan brought forward by my noble Friend, has been for some time under the consideration of Her Majesty's Government; and we were obliged therefore to look at it in its different aspects, with a view to the adoption of some plan with respect to railways which might be useful to the country, or which might be suited to the present state of destitution and want, I am afraid to say famine, which prevails in Ireland. Sir, in considering such a plan, I would say but a few words with respect to its fitness as a plan suited to the general state of Ireland. My noble Friend near me, the First Commissioner of Woods and Forests (Lord Morpeth), some years ago proposed a plan with respect to railways, which I thought, and still think, would be of essential benefit to Ireland; but that plan proceeded on a totally different principle from that proposed by my noble Friend. It contemplated the formation of railways by the Government, to be conducted under the direction of persons to whom these railways should be let, producing 4 per cent interest; and any additional interest was to be applied either to the extension of railways or the diminution of charges. According to that plan, the object would have been gained which many persons still think very important—namely, a Government control over the railways of that part of the United Kingdom with respect to the Post Office, with respect to the conveyance of troops and stores, and with respect to the directions of the lines and the places to which they ought to go. In all these respects the Government Commissioners thought it would be advantageous to place the lines under the control of the Government; and many persons were of opinion that the French system is far superior to that which has been adopted in this country. But that is a plan not at all resembling that which has been brought forward by my noble Friend. In the course of some years Bills for lines have been passed, the execution of which would require a capital of 15,000,000*l.*—lines extending over several hundred miles of country; and of course any such plan could not be applied as it might have been if no railways had been commenced. Then, speaking as a general plan of the proposition of my noble Friend, I should say that it is not advisable for Her Majesty's Government to step out of its usual course to interfere with the general application of capital to railways, and to favour one set of companies having set on foot particular railways, rather than another. The very instance which my noble Friend has adduced of the North British Railway being at 40 per cent premium, and of the Southern and Western in Ireland being at 6 per cent discount—[Lord GEORGE BENTINCK here made a remark which was not heard in the gallery]—the exact amount does not signify, but the illustration shows how inexpedient it would be for the Government to interfere in the matter. There is a rate of the market—there is a rate at which people laying out their money think it expedient to value the shares of different railways. Now I think it must be obvious that for a Government to come in to raise the price of shares, and thereby to give them an advantage in the market, thereby to divert some of the capital which would be given to other railways which had no Government assistance, but which stood entirely on their own merits, and the advantage of having private capital given to them—that in itself, in ordinary circumstances, would be a departure from the functions of the Government, and an undue interference with the application of capital, favouring certain parties to the detriment of certain other parties, both of which might be equally deserving of the protection of the Government. But, Sir, the present case is brought forward, and I think its whole merits rest, upon its application to the present distress in Ireland. It is therefore with a view to the present distressed state of Ireland that we have looked at the question. Some time ago—perhaps two months—the railway companies of Ireland had a meeting in Dublin. They made a representation to the Lord Lieutenant, and the Lord Lieutenant transmitted that representation to me. It was to this effect, that supposing that the Railway Acts which had been passed during the year 1845 and 1846 required 15,000,000*l.* in order for their completion, the Government should in the course of three years advance 5,000,000*l.*, the railway companies engaging to advance the other 10,000,000*l.* That plan was not so complete as the one proposed by my noble Friend; but it evidently rested on the same principle. I inquired what the effect of such a proposition would be; and let me observe that we stood in the position of having before us the expenditure of large sums of money, partly by loan, partly by grant from the Treasury of the empire, in order to alleviate the extreme distress which prevailed in Ireland. We could not, of course, suppose that there was a boundless mine of wealth at our disposal. We were bound to consider, seeing that the demands must be very large, in what manner they could be applied to the relief of that distress which was the most urgent and the most pressing. Now, my noble Friend can have no difficulty in agreeing with me, after the horrible scenes to which he adverted at the end of his speech, that the most pressing want is the want of food amongst the most destitute, and in the most remote parts of the country. But, Sir, the application of money for the formation of railways by railway companies does not appear to me calculated to promote that particular object. It may be, and indeed it is true, that a railway is a great advantage to the country. Without entering into the calculations of my noble Friend—and those calculations I should not dispute when he has had such assistance as that of the hon. Member for Sunderland (Mr. Hudson), Mr. Stephenson, and Mr. Laing—assistance than which none more able or competent can be found—without entering into those details, I shall not dispute my noble Friend's calculations as to the ultimate benefit to be derived from railways. But the question we had to consider was, how the application of a large sum of money from the Treasury could best relieve those who were immediately oppressed by destitution. And it is obvious that the first thing which railway companies do—and upon that point I examined some of the members of the deputation who waited upon me—the first thing they do, when a railway is to be constructed, is to apply to certain contractors to contract for certain parts of the line. I asked further, what these contractors did, and whether the companies had any control with respect to the persons whom they might employ? They said they had no control — that these contractors went to sub-contractors, who take smaller parts of the line, thus removing two degrees from themselves the persons who would have to employ the labourers. I inquired what conditions they made with these parties? They replied that the conditions were, that when a man is an able-bodied labourer, and after he has been learning his trade as it were for two or three weeks, not less than 1*s*. 6*d*. a day would be paid him—that they made that agreement with them, but that further they made none whatever. Therefore, the Government was to advance money to the companies, the companies were to engage with the contractors, these contractors with the sub-contractors, the sub-contractors engaging the labourers for the line. Of course these sub-contractors would first engage only the most able-bodied men—those who were the most able to do the work. In the next place, they would engage them at the times when they were wanted, and at the places where their services were required. If there was a village in great distress, at some distance, of course they would not trouble themselves with the distress and destitution of that village. If there were a number of old men whose labour was not of great value in the market, even although they might be starving, the sub-contractors, having to perform the work for a certain sum of money, would not consider it their business to give them employment; they would naturally employ those persons only whose labour was well worth the money to be paid for it. Therefore, it appeared to us that the plan was not calculated to relieve the present distress or the most pressing destitution—first, because the kind of labour to be employed would not be that which tends most to the relief of the existing distress; and in the next place, on examining the map which was brought to me, I perceived, what, indeed, was natural to expect, that the counties through which these railroads are intended to pass are the least distressed counties in Ireland—those counties in the east and the north in which the smallest number of cases of distress have been witnessed, which generally are the most flourishing, and which in times of destitution suffer the least. Therefore the railroad labour did not apply to those parts of the country which are peculiarly distressed, and to which, in the first place, our attention ought to be drawn. Sir, the question of assisting railways has been under the consideration of the former Government, and in the papers which were presented last year I find the minute of an answer given by the Lords of the Treasury, in April, to an application which had been made by a railway company. They said—

> "Acquaint the parties that my Lords do not consider it advisable to make special advances to railway companies who have undertaken to make railways on private account, exclusively for individual advantage; that it is open to those companies to raise money by calls on their subscribers, or by loans; and that on the application to the Commissioners for Exchequer Loans, their claim to receive a loan from the public funds on the same conditions and securities as the undertakers of the works of the same description, will be duly considered."

I believe the late Government had occasion, as well as the present, maturely to consider the application. I understand from the late Chancellor of the Exchequer, that it had been considered, and no doubt the reasons which influenced them must have been not very different from those which I have stated to the House. It did not appear to them that furnishing these railway companies with money was the manner in which the relief of the distress could be best effected. Now, with respect to the distress at present existing in Ireland, my noble Friend's calculations have been generally accurate, and I think he could hardly promise there would be such a duration of employment as he imagined, when he supposed that each of the 1,500 miles of railway would employ sixty men during the whole time of their construction. Of course many of these railways, or at least parts of them, would be soon finished. [Lord G. BENTINCK was understood to say that sometimes 200 would be employed, but sixty was the average number.] The difference is, I think, immaterial, with respect to particular districts. Great inconvenience has sometimes been experienced in a district from the railway works having altogether suddenly ceased, to suit the convenience of the railway company or the contractors, without reference to the destitution which such a stoppage to the works may occasion. It is therefore, quite impossible that persons in the greatest distress, who are spread all over the country in the south and the west, could be relieved or even derive any material benefit from expenditure of this money. What is necessary for them is food. You may call public works useless if you will. They may be useless, except for the purpose of giving wages to those who are without food, as the means of supplying their wants. The system now proposed for you to adopt is a system to give food to those 480,000 persons employed on the public works (who represent 2,500,000), or to give them the means by which food may be purchased. The present emergency is such that it appears to me that giving them food is the chief object at which you ought to aim, and that object will not be accomplished by the railway system. There are other permanent objects which may be accomplished hereafter; but the present object is to endeavour to do as you do by the poor rates in England in a time of great distress. When great distress exists in England, and there is a great pressure on the poor rates, you do not consider whether they are doing any useful work, or employed for any purpose; your object is to distribute food, and by that means enable them to maintain themselves until more prosperous times. On that distress which is the more pressing, I say the railway project of my noble Friend will have little effect. Now, with respect to the general improvement of Ireland, I agree generally in the picture which my noble Friend has drawn. I agree with him in thinking that the establishment of railroads in Ireland would be of immense benefit; and I do hope to see railroads established in that country; nor do I say altogether that in every case public assistance ought to be refused. But this I say, that having a case of real destitution before us, I do not think it will be wise at the present time to devote 16,000,000*l.* of the public money to the promotion of railroads. I do not believe that it would be a wise expenditure; and seeing the vast demands upon us, I think if we did so, we should be obliged to check other expenditure which is more immediately necessary. I do not wish to enter further into this question. I shall not oppose the introduction of the Bill. I understand from the Speaker that, in point of form, no objection exists to its introduction, provided it does not introduce those money clauses which would require a previous Committee. But, Sir, when I say that I do not oppose the introduction of the Bill, let my noble Friend understand me, that I may not be accused afterwards, as I trust I never shall be accused, of practising deception. My opinion is, that it would not be wise for the Government to adopt the scheme of my noble Friend. When we go into Committee for the purpose of voting the money, I think there will be but two courses for the Government to pursue: either to adopt the scheme entirely as their own, to make themselves responsible for it, and carry it out as their own; or, on the other hand, refusing to be any parties to it, to refuse their assent to its being carried on by my noble Friend. When a vast grant of public money is proposed, the confidential servants of the Crown are obliged to take a decided line.

MR. BERNAL OSBORNE supported the principle of the Bill. He thought it would have been more consistent with the courage for which the noble Lord at the head of the Government was remarkable, if he had boldly refused to give his assent to the introduction of the Bill, rather than give his consent to that stage for the sake of conciliating certain support in Ireland, while he at the same time notified that he would oppose the measure in Committee. The noble Member for Lynn deserved more of the gratitude of Ireland than any party in that House, for he was the only one who had brought forward a great plan for the redemption of that country from her misery. The noble Lord at the head of the Government mystified himself, and contradicted his own statements, for in one part of his speech he protested that it would be anything but fair or proper to give a preference to one railway company over another, and yet in the very next sentence he admitted that he did not see any serious objection to the practice, and he even went so far as to say that it was not impossible that at some future time he might himself adopt it. But there was no time like the present. If the proceeding was one that ought to be sanctioned under any circumstances, surely there was no moment at which those circumstances existed so palpably and pressed so urgently as at the present. He could wish to have seen the Government coming forward with some great comprehensive and statesmanlike project similar to that which had been introduced by the noble Lord the Member for Lynn; but it was deeply to be deplored that not only would they not bring in any such measure themselves, but that they would not permit such a measure to be promoted by any one else. The speech of the noble Lord at the head of the Government would produce deep dissatisfaction in Ireland. The Irish people would not be content to see their representatives pat them on the back, and bring in for their relief nothing but paltry, insignificant measures. That description of legislation would not do. They expected that the Government would have been prepared with some great comprehensive scheme, and that they would not have contented themselves with filching the little measures of individual Members. In conclusion, he had to reiterate the intimation of his surprise and regret at the conduct pursued by the Government; and again to express his unqualified admiration at the bold, statesmanlike, and comprehensive scheme of the noble Lord the Member for Lynn.

Mr. ROEBUCK said, that, in common with the hon. Member for Wycombe, he too had to express his surprise and regret at the course pursued by the noble Lord at the head of the Government. The noble Lord had, in distinct terms, given the House to understand that he had an insuperable objection to the Bill of the noble Lord the Member for Lynn, and yet he so far sanctioned it as to permit its being read a first time! Why had that been done? If it was an improper proceeding to adopt the Bill at all, why did the noble Lord permit it to go out to the world with the sanction even of a first reading? He (Mr. Roebuck) objected to the Bill *in limine*, and he would tell the noble Lord the Member for Lynn, and the House, why he did so. The noble Lord proposed that this country should employ some fifteen or sixteen millions on a certain description of speculation in Ireland, namely, the construction of railways. In ordinary cases the application of capital was left to private enterprise, private speculation, private energy, and all the responsibilities which were necessarily incurred by private individuals in expending their money. In ordinary cases capital thus obtained was obtained from the rich; it was procured out of the surplus wealth of the population, and was applied by those who collected and supplied it under all the responsibilities to which he had alluded. But what did the noble Lord the Member for Lynn propose? He did not ask the rich to come forward; but he modestly requested the noble Lord at the head of the Government to tax the people of England in order to apply their capital to Ireland. His objection rested on that ground. He objected to the people of England being taxed for the purpose of employing the capital of the country in any speculation at all. Tax the people of England by all means for the purposes of Government; but let them not be taxed for such purposes as these. Had he not a right to appeal to every English Member who represented an English constituency in that House, and to ask him whether he were prepared to suffer his poorer constituents to be taxed for such purposes as these? The noble Lord at the head of the Ministry told them that he should be obliged to expend 9,000,000*l*. in relieving the distress which existed at the present moment in Ireland. By a report, which was then lying on the Table, it appeared that presentments to the amount of 2,500,000*l*. had already been made in Ireland; and a Bill had been brought in by the present Administration, and was that moment awaiting the decision of the House, the object of which was to allow the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland and the Treasury to sanction still further presentments, to the amount of 2,500,000*l*. But this was not all. The noble Lord the First Minister of the Crown acknowledged to 9,000,000*l*. [Lord J. Russell intimated dissent.] The noble Lord had expressly stated that seven millions of money would be wanted between this and August for the relief of the distressed poor in Ireland. Then, he said, that 2,000,000*l*. had already been appropriated for the same purpose, thus making 9,000,000*l*. If, besides that, 2,500,000*l*. were to be added by way of presentment, the sum total of money required for the exigencies of Ireland would be no less than 11,500,000*l*. 11,500,000*l*. were ready to be called for; and now the noble Lord the Member for Lynn had the heroism to come down and ask for 16,000,000*l*., making the total of moneys to be applied by Government for the relief of Ireland 26,000,000*l*.

55,000,000*l.* was the ordinary sum they could collect every year. Of that sum more than one-half went to the payment of the national debt; so that they had eight millions of people now demanding from the Government more than one-half of the actual revenue of the State. It was all very fine for hon. Members to talk of "great comprehensive schemes;" and it was very easy to apply the charges of hard-heartedness and cruelty to other Members who had some consideration for their over-taxed countrymen. Such conscientious Members might be, and no doubt would be, accused of malignity and mendacity, or of gross ignorance, when they made statements such as he now was making; but it was yet to be seen what the world out of doors would say, and what their constituents would say, when they would come to be taxed. He had been told by the mayor of the town which he had the honour to represent, that such was the distress prevailing there, that poor women were obliged to strip their children of the poor clothes that covered their nakedness, and to tear them up and sell them for twopence a pound, as rags, in order that they might procure the means of purchasing food. When things of this kind were told of Ireland, there were great manifestations of sympathy; but when the same things were told of Somersetshire, there was marked carelessness, philosophic indifference, and hon. Gentlemen smiled as if at the exaggeration of the description. And yet there was no exaggeration. He had it under the statement of the first city officer, and from the tax-gatherers themselves, who told him that when they went to the dwellings of the poor to collect taxes not paid in Ireland, the assessed taxes—let that be marked—the women were obliged to take the wedding-ring from their fingers to satisfy the demand. And yet they talked of "comprehensive schemes," and inveighed against the hard-heartedness of all who did not fall into the strange vagaries of the noble Lord the Member for Lynn. The noble Lord talked about his willingness to sacrifice his head, which he valued very highly himself, though what value other people might be inclined to attach to it was quite another matter, in the event of his scheme failing, were it adopted, to fill the bellies of the Irish people with good mutton and nut-brown ale. The men were to be comfortably clad in the cloths of Manchester, and their wives to be bedizened with the ribbons of Coventry; and in addition to all this, they were to have English gold in their pockets. English gold in their pockets would be the commencement and the end of that halcyon state. But there would be no more gold in the pockets of the English—no more broad cloth on their backs—no more ribbons on their wives—no more ale—no more mutton. Was not the conduct of the noble Lord the Member for Lynn, in the House that night, a sad exhibition to be made by any man who knew anything of the state of the English people? Was it to be borne that a man should get up and declare that he was about to produce, by some kind of necromancy, the extraordinary effect of feeding the people on mutton and ale in Ireland, when England was herself at that moment in such a condition of distress that large bodies of her people were never in the habit of tasting either mutton or ale? If, in the same spirit, any one were to stand up and, representing that large numbers in Scotland were suffering from distress, were to insist upon it that the people of Scotland should be maintained out of the English Treasury; and if those who resisted the application were to be accused of malignity and mendacity for not accepting the proposition, to what a pretty pass would not things soon come? And yet they might come to that pass too at the rate they were going. If they once departed from the simple and wise rule of allowing private enterprise to govern all the transactions connected with the application of capital, where would they end? As a representative of a portion of the people of England, he too would come down to that House, and demand a sum of money for England as well. [Mr. OSBORNE: Only fair.] He was glad to hear the hon. Member for Wycombe say it was only fair. It was clear, therefore, they had come to a general scramble for property. If they were to make a general collection for purposes like these, and to carry out the principle fairly, they were throwing property into a hodgepodge, and having a general scramble for it. The noble Lord opposite had based his proposition on one or two things. He either thought it was a good plan as a matter of mere speculation, or that it was merely good as an expedient for relieving the distress in Ireland. Now, the last of these pretences he would take first, and direct the noble Lord's attention to the fact, that the noble Lord at the head of the Government had expressly and emphatically declared it to be his opinion, that the scheme would be totally inoperative of good as a remedy for distress. The noble Lord had shown most satisfactorily, that as an expedient for relieving the present distress it would be absolutely useless. No; it was simply taking advantage of the present distressing state of Ireland, to press the ordinary demands of the Irish landlords, and of persons in that House connected with Ireland, on the people of England. ["No, no!"] Yes, let it go forth that hon. Gentlemen connected with Ireland cried out in that manner against a statement which they knew they could not combat; but they might rest assured that if ever a bill of appropriation of that sort were to be brought in, there was one clause which he would take especial care to introduce into it, namely, that no Member of either House of Parliament should be permitted to share in the proceeds. He hoped the hon. Member for Wycombe would second his Motion. But if the scheme was not one for the relief of the distress in Ireland, what was it? Just what he said—an attempt to take advantage of the present state of Ireland, in order to force on the English House of Commons a plan of that kind for the advantage of the landlords of Ireland, and that too in addition to loans already made for the draining of land, the making of roads, and all the other projects. It appeared to him to be one of the most marvellous propositions that had ever been made within the walls of that House. He was sorry there had not been a division on the Bill. He was anxious for it. The course that had been adopted was an easy way to get out of a difficulty. Leave was given to bring in the Bill; but when it would come on for second reading, the noble Lord at the head of the Government would quietly stand up and say he could not sanction it, and to the ground it would drop at once. But the people would not understand what their constituents would have done in the event of the question being brought to a division. The whole thing had gone quietly out. Already it was amongst the things that were. The noble Lord the Member for Lynn had all the glorification of having devised a most magnificent plan for making railways in Ireland. Government would courteously declare their regret that they could not sanction the magnificent plan; and the magnificent plan would accordingly go out like the snuff of a candle, and they would hear no more about it. He defied the noble Lord to take a step in advance after that. The consent of the Crown would not be given, and there would be an end to the Bill. It was really a little too hard that the noble Lord should have consumed three hours of the public time in making a speech on a Bill which every one in the House knew would not be permitted to be proceeded with. The noble Lord had made a very grand speech, and got a great deal of glory, and there was the whole sum and substance of their senatorial proceedings that night. It appeared to him that they would have been much better employed in considering the Government's proposal for a new poor law, and in accelerating the enactment of feasible and rational measures for the immediate mitigation of distress. He sincerely hoped that the noble Lord at the head of the Government would not for the future sanction any measure like the present, even so far as to permit its being read the first time. It would have been much more in accordance with the usual straightforward policy of the noble Lord, that he should have at once declared that the Bill was one of which he could not consistently with his duty approve. However, though this had not been done, as it was morally and physically impossible that the noble Lord the Member for Lynn could take another step in the matter, it was just as well that the House and the public out of doors should at once understand that the responsibility of the refusal of the Bill rested on the head of the Government. The House of Commons could express no opinion whatever on it. The whole responsibility of its rejection rested with the Administration, and nobody else.

Alderman THOMPSON thought that the noble Lord at the head of the Government would have taken a great responsibility indeed, if he had refused permission to bring in the Bill. He would have been treating the country very improperly after the able, bold, and practical exposition delivered by the noble Lord the Member for Lynn. The hon. and learned Member for Bath was very much mistaken in supposing that the noble Lord proposed by that measure to tax the people of this country to the extent of sixteen millions. If he understood the noble Lord aright, he had not contemplated anything of the kind. He did not propose to tax the people of this country one shilling. All he asked was, that there should be lent on the national credit of the country, upon ample and sufficient security, 16,000,0000*l.* for the promotion of railways, and the relief thereby of the people. The public, he was sure, would be much more dissatisfied on learning, that instead of the noble Lord's plan being adopted, 7,000,000*l.* or 8,000,0000*l.* was to be given to Ireland, there being no prospect of receiving back more than 10*s.* in the pound. A strong feeling to this effect was gaining strength abroad, notwithstanding the unquestionable existence of a sentiment of sincere sympathy for the sufferings of the Irish people—a sentiment which was nowhere felt more acutely than among those connected with the moneyed interests. The reason why there was no private enterprise just then in the promotion of railway projects in Ireland was, that the majority of the railway proprietors were Irish gentlemen, who had subscribed in anticipation of receiving rents which they had never received. He did not concur with the noble Lord the First Minister of the Crown in the opinion that the plan of the noble Lord on his left would not be operative of good in relieving distress, for though it might be quite true that the railways would run through the least distressed districts, those of the east and north, the relief committees in the south and west, when able-bodied men applied to them for relief, would no doubt display great alacrity in transferring them to the railways in progress in the east and north.

MR. POULETT SCROPE did not agree with the hon. Member for Bath in thinking that the time of the House had been wasted in listening to the speech and the very well-arranged plan of the noble Lord the Member for Lynn. He thought, on the contrary, that the answer that had been given to him by the noble Lord the First Lord of the Treasury would prove to those who had paid attention to his argument, that at all events—even supposing the noble Lord below him to be correct in his dislike of the proposition — that at all events the arguments were not so overwhelming on that side as the hon. Member for Bath seemed to suppose. Therefore it was desirable that the arguments on the other side should be fully laid before the Legislature and the country, with a view to the consideration of their applicability to the present extraordinary circumstances of the country. He thought the noble Lord had exercised a sound discretion in not refusing to entertain this Bill. He owned that it appeared to him possible that it might be made to dovetail in very admirably with that scheme which the noble Lord had laid so ably before the House. So far as he understood it, he believed it to be (in spite of what the hon. Member for Bath had insinuated that night) a good scheme when considered with reference to the distress in Ireland, and the chronic misery that had so long prevailed there. He felt it was impossible to allow Ireland to go on any longer as she had been going on, and that a great effort must be made on her behalf. He was of opinion that that effort must be made by the combination of as many great resources as they could by possibility combine, only supposing them to be applicable to the circumstances of the case ; that no one measure was sufficient ; that they must have a combination of great and extraordinary measures if they entertained any hopes of success. He for one had been alluded to as having for some years advocated one of those measures, and he was told that he had put it forward as the panacea and nostrum that would do everything for Ireland. That was contrary to the fact : he never thought that the introduction of a larger poor law for Ireland, even to the extent of the English poor law, could effect the beneficial objects they had in view, unless it was accompanied, as the noble Lord had said it should be accompanied, with a great series of invigorating measures, having for their main object the development of the resources of Ireland by the employment of her population. The hon. Member for Bath had talked to them of not interfering with ordinary industry and the commercial principle and enterprise; but he maintained that the principle which guided them under ordinary circumstances was not applicable to the present condition of Ireland. He believed that they could not cure Ireland by the application of the commercial principle ; for what was the present state of that country ? Would any person take up any of the blue books that had been laid before them within the last few days, and glance at them, and then tell him if such a state of things had ever before occurred ? It appeared that they were spending at the rate of about 1,000,000*l.* a month in that country on (more or less) unproductive works. The proposal of the noble Lord was to put an end, as soon as he could, to unproductive expenditure, though it could be done but by slow degrees, and to substitute a scheme of relief which, so far as he understood it, was to distribute food to those in want of it, without securing any return in the shape of labour. He did not understand how the noble Lord was to have security for return of labour by the able-bodied to whom the food was given. It was necessary that they should adopt large and extensive efforts for the employment of labourers, and it was suggested that they should leave it to capitalists and Irish proprietors to employ them; but he thought it was absolutely necessary that the Government of the country should take the initiative and set the example. Under ordinary circumstances, the capitalists of England, from the expectation of those large profits which the noble Lord held out to them that night, might be induced to embark in railways and other schemes that would cause the employment of capital in Ireland; but the circumstances in which the commercial principle could alone exert itself, or would safely develop itself, that first principle was wanting in Ireland. That condition was the security of personal property. They had not that security at present; and until they obtained it, private capital would not find its way into Ireland, to the extent that was required to set in motion the enormous amount of labour that was now unemployed. And how could they expect it? He dare say the House would recollect, in the report of Mr. Nichol, in 1837, an argument which had made, he believed, a considerable impression on the public. It appeared that capital would not go freely into Ireland because of the insecurity of personal property; that property was insecure there from the want of employment; and thus the circle was completed. The question now was, how they would break that circle up. The Government, to some extent, proposed to do this by their scheme. So far as he understood, the noble Lord intended to employ a large portion of the public money in some system of arterial drainage of the country. He proposed the further plan which he, for one, would be glad to see them executing; he alluded to their intention of commencing the reclamation of a portion of the waste lands in Ireland: but he thought it would not be an unwise addition to the list of measures of the noble Lord, if he took into consideration the propriety of extending his aims to railway enterprise, now at a standstill in Ireland. If there was any truth whatever in the calculations brought forward that night by the noble Lord, he could not believe the money would be so unproductive. Even if it were wasted, and even if it were not repaid, why, to what extent must they expend money in raising Ireland from her present condition, and for feeding millions of her population that were now sinking into pauperism and misery? How could they feed them without a large expenditure? and no one, he believed, wished to leave them in their present condition. The voluntary employment that was given to them by landlords, would not absorb all the labour of the country; and he could not but think that a great scheme of railroads, somewhat in the way of the proposition of the noble Lord, would be a beneficial adjunct to the other elements of the comprehensive schemes introduced by the Government. He did not wish to intrude upon the House, but he could not help putting forward this statement. He considered that the proposition with reference to the commercial principle, and leaving capital to introduce itself into Ireland, was not applicable to the present unprecedented position of the country; and if they acted upon that proposition, they would, in ten months hence, find themselves in the same position as they did now.

Colonel THOMAS WOOD observed, that the measure before the House had been described as a proposition for lending the credit of the country for the promotion of railways in Ireland. They knew that the credit of the country was indefinite, and that it was impossible to say to what extent the credit of the country might be involved in those speculations. He regretted the course taken by the noble Lord (Lord John Russell) on this occasion; and he must say he was not true to himself in taking that course. They had evinced every disposition to do everything that was just and necessary for the relief of distress in Ireland; but he believed they were not prepared to undertake the completion of those railways. He was disposed to assist the Government in the measures they had brought forward for the relief of Ireland; but he did not think the noble Lord had done well in waiving the forms of the House to permit the introduction of this Bill—forms that were made to prevent Bills of this kind (containing money clauses) being thus introduced; and without the money clauses of the Bill it would be mere waste paper.

Mr. HUME knew there was but one feeling in that House, to relieve Ireland if possible; but there must be at the same time those considerations for the other parts of the empire, to which the hon.

Member for Bath had referred. He thought it would have been better for the noble Lord (Lord John Russell) at once to have taken the opinion of the House on this question. He did not think the noble Lord had done himself justice in not stating to the House the reasons assigned by the Government that preceded him for not acceding to this demand, which had been represented by Mr. Trevelyan as the reasons why the late Government had refused to accede to it. He should have stated to the House, in the plainest way, the objections to do so which were contained in the letter of Mr. Trevelyan to Mr. Labouchere, on the 6th of October, 1846. In that letter, Mr. Trevelyan appeared to give the true reasons which induced Sir Robert Peel steadily to resist the solicitations pressed upon him to make advances to Irish railways. Mr. Trevelyan said—

> "I will now perform my promise to the best of my ability, and give you the reasons why Sir R. Peel and his Government wished to suppress the introduction of railways into Ireland."

And then went on to state, that were they introduced, they would not be of any assistance to "relieve the destitute labourer, but be the means of putting money into the pockets of the speculative shareholder." In the next paragraph, he said—

> "The only portion of the expenditure incurred in the construction of railways that is applicable to the relief of general distress is that incurred by earth-works, and that constitutes on an average but one-third of the whole work; the rest of the expenditure is appropriated to the purchase of land, the erection of buildings, parliamentary and legal expenses, &c."

Here were the reasons assigned by Mr. Trevelyan as those which had influenced the late Government. He wished the noble Lord had made use of this argument, which was so forcibly put, and which to his (Mr. Hume's) mind was perfectly unanswerable. Would any hon. Gentleman, in the present state of distress in England and Scotland, incur that responsibility? for Mr. Trevelyan afterwards stated, if those railways were not productive they would become a charge on the taxation of the country; and that was a question the Chancellor of the Exchequer was bound to look to. He was one of those who undoubtedly regretted that railways were not introduced at an earlier period into Ireland. He was one of those who had at a former period strongly supported the proposition for the introduction of railways into Ireland. He thought the making of the trunk lines would lead to considerable expenditure, which would be productive not only to the labouring classes, but to the commercial classes of the country, and he supported the proposition; but he found the country gentlemen of Ireland were the principal opponents of the measure. He did not say that ought to prevent them on the present occasion from giving assistance if they could see a fair reason for giving it; but looking to the reasons which Mr. Trevelyan had so ably put before them, he did not think they should. And also from other information he had received, he did not think that those railways would pay the interest of the expenditure. He asked whether the hon. Member for Stroud was right in saying the commercial principle ought not to be adopted? He would state what he meant by the commercial principle, and he wished the noble Lord at the head of the Government to take the question into consideration. He was informed by several Irish gentlemen, qualified, as far as he could judge, to give an opinion on the subject, they being anxious to employ labour, that all that was requisite to employ labour, was to give individuals who had capital the land that lay there waste, to till; to remove restrictions against the sale of land; to modify, if not to remove, the entail; to remove the burdens that were spread over property in Ireland, and to allow those who were anxious to pay their debts to have a portion of their estates sold for the purpose. He had alluded to the subject on a former evening, and since then he had obtained more correct information. It appeared that there was land waste and unproductive now, and if the Government attempted to improve it, the attempt would be attended with loss and ruin; but let that land be free, let it be sold—and it could be sold to any extent in portions of from 300 to 500 acres, for twenty-eight years' purchase. There would then be the immediate application of the capital of the purchaser to the improvement of the land, and that would take place all over Ireland. One of the first measures that should be introduced to give instantaneous employment, was to allow the commercial principle to operate. The man who bought land should be allowed to apply his own capital to that land. It would give instantaneous employment to labour in every part of Ireland, and be one of the best ways of regenerating that country. He thought the noble Lord ought to be more distinct than he had been in the expression of his opinion, and should not have held out anything like a hope, for the result would be an expectation on the part of Ireland that the Government would come forward with its money. The country gentlemen would then do as they had already done, namely, expect the Government to do all that was necessary. The time was come when the Government should tell them, that unless they undertook their duty, and acted as they ought to do, it was impossible for any assistance to save their country. He regretted to see that by any Bill before the House, the Lord Liutenant was to do this, and the Lord Lieutenant was to do that. There were committees appointed by law to regulate and manage the money of the poor; and why should they not now be called upon to take the entire charge? But instead of that, nothing was to be done without the Lord Lieutenant. It would be much better to remove the Lord Lieutenant, and allow the measures to go from the Treasury without any intermediate interruption.

Mr. H. GRATTAN complained of the gross exaggerations which appeared in the newspapers respecting Ireland and the Irish Members. He expected to see an exaggerated account of the proceedings of the Irish Members with respect to this proposition. For instance, he should not be surprised to see it stated, that last night a meeting of Irish Members was held in the neighbourhood of Westminster, and there was present a person who had got off the Bath coach, who presented a brass blunderbuss at those attending it, but which fortunately missed fire, whereupon the villain went off. The hon. Member for Bath, who had indulged in such vituperation and abuse of the Irish landlords, had complained that a charge of mendacity and malignity had been brought against him. He had made no such charge. But what right had the hon. Member to charge the resident Irish landlords with the neglect of their duty, which was an unfounded accusation? What were the facts of the case? The countrymen of the hon. Member went to Ireland to rob and plunder the country, and he had now the audacity to bring such charges as he had indulged in. What right, therefore, had the hon. Member to attack Irish Members who remained in Ireland in discharge of their duty? The hon. Member did not know what was the duty of Irish landlords, or what were their interests. They had never asked for a gift of money. But what had really occurred? The Government of this country borrowed money at 3½ per cent, which they got five per cent for from the Irish people. The hon. Member had said that the money advanced to the Irish landlords had not been repaid; but what was the fact? Of 350 loans lent to Ireland, considerably more than three-fourths had been paid back, with five per cent interest. Out of 700,000*l*. lent, only 131,000*l*. was unpaid. The hon. Member complained of English gold being sent to Ireland; but when there was a surplus of Irish gold in the Irish Exchequer, who took it? Did the Irish landlords or the Irish people? No; but the Sovereign of the country of which the hon. Member was a representative. When the hon. Member complained of the amount sent from this country to Ireland, he would ask what had become of the English money which was sent to Ireland? Was it to be expended for purposes of virtue, or honour, or honesty? No such thing. It was sent there to buy and bribe the majority of the Irish House of Commons to demoralize, degrade, and destroy their country. This country was now reaping the consequences of such proceedings. He rejoiced that there was a God in heaven who would punish and avenge such crimes: "Vengeance is mine, saith the Lord, and I will repay." He rejoiced that that House had at length been brought on its knees before those Irish beggars whom it had reduced to that condition. The hon. Member alluded to the large exports of Irish produce to England. Was he to be told that his country was benefited by the exportation of Irish cattle and sheep? Every ox taken out of the country threw thirty men out of employ. The hide was taken from the tanner, the hoofs and the horns from the turner and other manufacturers, and the victualler and the salter were also thrown out of employ. The object of the exportation of cattle was not to benefit the people, but to pay the rents of absentee landlords, who came over to this country to spend it. He held in his hand a list of absentees, and the amount drawn from the country by them. He found that the brother of an hon. Member who had just taken his seat, drew, as an absentee landlord, not less than 7,000*l*. a year from one county in Ireland. In Wicklow, 50,000*l*. a year was paid to absentee landlords, and in Waterford 40,000*l*., and in other counties the amount was in an equal ratio. Was he to be told that no injury was done to his country by these individuals? Government had thought fit to say that the present calamity was a visitation.

It was so. But it was not the loss of some millions which could have reduced his country to its present state of abject misery. Since the Union down she had dropped: she had dropped from the sky of prosperity to the lowest state of adversity. It had taken away the nobility and gentry of Ireland, and had left the people to their own unaided resources. When this country had to pay not merely ten, but twenty or thirty millions, she would send the Irish landlords—not as Cromwell did, across the Shannon, but—across the Channel. Their children would have to rue the consequences of their misdeeds, as the present generation did the injustice of their progenitors. He wished to caution Irish Members and the Irish people against the insidious and artful advice of those who would lead them to destruction. The hon. and learned Member for Bath, in attacking the gentry and the people of Ireland, had indulged in what he (Mr. Grattan) would not call satire or calumny, but what he would call the dripping poison of a shrivelled adder. The Irish Members had never forgotten their loyalty to their Sovereign in the worst of times. In 1778 and 1796, when on neither occasion were there more than 6,000 men in the country, they had shown their devoted loyalty. On one occasion, when they had the most just ground of complaint for a wrong done their country, they were addressed by a Member of that House in the most seditious language, but they disregarded the advice then given them. For language much less seditious, persons had in Ireland been sent to the gallows or transported. The hon. Member to whom he alluded stated, on the occasion in question—

> "If the Members for Ireland would take his advice, they would leave that House at once and for ever, as it was plain Ireland could not look for justice from an English House of Commons. If the opinions of Parliament were to be judged of by the opinions and votes of its Members, justice never could be done to Ireland, and the sooner she was separated from England the better. The people of America having much less ground than Ireland had now to complain, had fought nobly for their independence, and had put down till then the indomitable pride of England. Unfortunately, Ireland had not followed so glorious an example, and the consequence was that she had suffered oppressions unequalled in any other country in Europe, with the exception of Poland. Irishmen had become the slaves of the despotism of England, and if they wished to continue so, instead of fighting manfully and boldly by every means in their power for their independence, they would passively give way to the provisions of the most iniquitous measure that had ever been brought forward, and they would deserve the execration of every honourable man."

Was not this seditious and traitorous language? He asked who was the traitor? Was it an Irish Member? No; it was the hon. Member for Bath who used those words in the debate on the Irish Coercion Bill in 1833; and he cautioned Irish Members and English Members against taking the counsel of such a man. He felt satisfied that the greatest calamities had been inflicted on Ireland by following such advice as that of the hon. Member for Bath. He would now leave this piece of sedition, and come to the common-sense view of the matter. He trusted that the Government would not neglect the advice of the noble Lord the Member for Lynn on this subject, as embodied in the proposed Bill; for if it were acted on, it would give employment for five years to 550,000 persons. All that he would ask, if this measure was refused, was to send the Irish Members back to their country to legislate and make laws for themselves. If they were sent back in this way, they would no longer want money from this country, or loans borrowed at 3½ per cent, and charged to them at 5 per cent; and the result would be successful, as they would be enabled to combine the common-sense of the people of England, the economy of Scotland, with the sterling honesty of the people of Ireland.

Mr. J. O'CONNELL regretted that, in the present awful state of destitution in Ireland, a single day should be lost in proceeding with the measures for the relief of that country. The Government appeared to be most earnest and anxious to push on their measures of relief. They exhibited the most earnest sincerity in their endeavours to carry into effect the measures proposed by them. The plans proposed by the noble Lord opposite, the Member for Lynn, might be good, or they might be bad—there certainly was much speciousness about them; but he called upon the noble Lord not to press them on at present—not to interfere with the Government in the progress of their measures. He begged of him not to forget that the Government had a great responsibility upon them; and he entreated him, in Heaven's name, not to remove from them that responsibility, and throw it upon his own and the Irish Members' shoulders. Let them, under any circumstances, do immediately what was necessary to avert the famine. Much of that night had been already lost. Much intemperate and uncalled-for language had been spoken. One hon. Member, who had upon other occasions made himself unfortunately conspicuous, had again indulged himself in a most intemperate strain. He (Mr. J. O'Connell) should think that if that hon. Member's head was right, his conscience could not be easy. What was the meaning of his coming forward and throwing the torch of useless discord into the debates of that House, whilst the people of Ireland were perishing by thousands? Of what use was it to taunt the Irish Members with all the moneys spent upon their country — to taunt them with such things as gifts—they who were firmly impressed with the belief that their country had been wronged instead of benefited — grievously wronged; yet who had, nevertheless, shown no disposition to discuss such subjects there? He asked, had the Irish Members shown any such disposition since the commencement of the Session? Had they not, on the contrary, come forward freely to give every assistance in their power to the progress of the measures proposed by the Government? And yet vituperation was poured upon them; and the hon. Member for Bath was allowed to vent upon them, not his splendid virus, but his sordid bile. He asked the hon. Member for Bath to forego for the present his attacks, and wait until the pressing measures for the relief of the starving people should have passed the House. Let him allow the Government to pass their plans; and then, let him give notice of his intention to appoint a day upon which he would pour out all his bile, all his taunts, all his animosity, all his slanders upon the Irish, and they (the Irish Members) would be ready to meet and to refute them. At that very moment there was a paper of the year 1845, which had been moved for by himself, which showed the amount of moneys remitted from Ireland to England since the Union; and by that paper it appeared, that the balance was 20,000,000*l.* in favour of Ireland—that 20,000,000*l.* had been drawn by England from Ireland between the time of the Union and the year 1845; for to that year only did the return extend. But they talked about payment — the chances of repayment. What did the returns connected with loans made to the three countries show? Why, he had found that 18,000,000*l.* and upwards had been advanced by way of loan to England and Scotland, of which just 6,200,000*l.* had been repaid up to the time of the last report furnished. The same report showed that 9,000,000*l.* had been advanced to Ireland, out of which 7,000,000*l.* had been repaid; so that, whilst they (the Irish) had repaid 7,000,000*l.* out of 9,000,000*l.*, England and Scotland had repaid only 6,000,000*l.* out of 18,000,000*l.* He asked the hon. Member for Bath, if that were the case, if his speech were not a mere ebullition of a temper certainly not suited to the House of Commons, nor, indeed, suited to any place of public discussion? Was it not a temper only fit for schoolboys to indulge in? If there were anything manly about the hon. Member, he asked the hon. Member to abstain from those insulting, unfounded, intemperate attacks upon Ireland and Irishmen. When the measures before the House should have been disposed of, they might be able to afford to throw a night away upon a discussion of the charges made against them; and if they (the Irish Members) did not fully refute them, they might then be deemed to be the shameless, abject creatures the hon. Member for Bath had represented them to be.

Mr. HUDSON regretted that the hon. Member for Bath should have introduced the subjects he had into the debate, and expressed his approval of the suggestion made by the hon. Member who had just sat down. It was really much to be desired that the hon. Member for Bath would take to himself an evening on which he could exhaust himself upon Irish subjects. But to turn to the question before the House. He begged to observe, in answer to the hon. Member for Middlesex, who had blamed the noble Lord the First Lord of the Treasury for giving an assent to the introduction of the measure of the noble Lord the Member for Lynn, that the hon. Member ought to be aware, from his own knowledge of the forms of the House, that in accordance with them the noble Lord the Member for Lynn had a right to introduce his Bill, and lay it before the House, in order that it might undergo investigation; and he trusted that, as the noble Lord the First Lord of the Treasury had suggested, the House would give it a patient and a calm consideration. He begged the House to consider that the plan proposed by it would not only give employment, but immediate employment, to a large portion of their suffering fellow-subjects; and that it would, at the same time, lay the groundwork of the future prosperity of the whole Irish people. He thought that not only the House, but the country, would feel much indebted to the noble Lord for the manner in which he had acted. The measure was one entitled to full and mature consideration; and although the noble Lord (Lord John Russell) might be then rather opposed to it, he trusted that he would, upon mature consideration, alter that opinion. As to the statements made by the noble Lord the Member for Lynn, and the figures which he had used in stating the advantages and profits of railway communication, he pledged himself to their accuracy. He pledged himself that they would all be borne out. And as for the mode by which those works were proposed to be carried out, he begged the House to recollect that they (the supporters of the Bill) were not going to introduce any new principle of giving Government aid to the advancement of such works. He appealed to the hon. Member for Montrose, who surely would remember the Caledonian Canal. The country from which that hon. Member (Mr. Hume) came, was not backward in asking for a share in the division of the good things to be had from that House. But if there were one principle in the Bill under consideration which more than another induced him to favour it, it was that which made him say that in his conscience he felt satisfied that the Government would not lose one sixpence by the measure. It was strictly, as had been stated by the noble Lord (Lord G. Bentinck), that the House was about to lend its credit for the benefit of one portion of the kingdom. It was not a question whether private enterprise was to be suspended or prevented from executing those works in Ireland. The noble Lord (Lord John Russell) might have as yet some strong objections to its apparent tendency; but he trusted, and he thought, those objections would not be strong hereafter. There was, in fact, no great chance of those works being carried out by private enterprise. He believed that any one who understood the position of those railway companies and of private feeling, must know that there was little chance of capital for their prosecution being found in Ireland, unless the aid of Government were given; and their object was merely to obtain the assistance of Government to private enterprise. Let them look abroad; did not France lend her money for the execution of such work? And although some might find fault with the principle, were not their advantages evident? He had had considerable experience in the consequences attendant upon the making of lines of railway. He had seen how fruitful the adjoining country had become. He had seen the spread of improvement. He had uniformly seen social intercourse very much promoted by those undertakings; and he did not see why similar results should not occur in Ireland. But it had been objected that the measure would be for the benefit of the Irish landlords. Surely, if they benefited any important class in the community, it followed as a matter of course that they should benefit the entire body. He trusted that those attacks upon the landlords of Ireland would cease. If the system of introducing railroads into Ireland were a good and a useful measure, let them at once look for the best means of carrying it into effect. And he contended, that where there existed a difficulty in obtaining the necessary capital by subscription, the best inducement there could be held out was the offering of some collateral security. He had had an instance in the difficulty attendant upon obtaining the means necessary for the construction of the line of railway north of Darlington; and the plan which he adopted was to call upon five or six other railway companies, and get two or three of them to join in securing 5 per cent interest upon the capital subscribed. The result was the immediate subscription of the full amount required. As to the utility of the lines proposed to be made by the assistance of the loan, there was now in existence an efficient Railway Board, to which all plans were obliged to be referred, and they could decide upon their merits after a careful examination of the circumstances. Let the plan be adopted, and people would be found to subscribe willingly, knowing that for every pound they paid to forward the undertaking, the Government would pay two. He repeated that it was no new principle. The only thing novel about it was its application to the construction of railways; and it would be as well if they were to lay down at once some plan for regulating the advance of public money for such purposes. But let it not be said that they were thus making gifts to Ireland. They were no gifts. And was not Ireland a part of the kingdom? Let the Government give assistance to the prosecution of those works which would be of benefit to the people, who were in a state of want. The noble Lord had stated as an example, that if some assistance had not been given by the Government to the construction of the Liverpool and Manchester Railway, it would not have been made—at all events so soon as it had been. But would any one get up in that House, and condemn the conduct of the Government of the day for having given that assistance? Surely not. But the construction of railroads was then in its infancy, and little understood; now they had reduced it to rule and certainty; and he hoped the noble Lord at the head of the Government would, when they got to the second reading of the Bill, give the arguments in its favour the consideration which he (Mr. Hudson) felt strongly they deserved. And if he should not then give to the plan suggested by the noble Lord the Member for Lynn that support which he (Mr. Hudson) trusted he would, he hoped that he would propose in its stead some other more conformable to his own views of the question. He should not detain the House longer, but he should conclude by expressing his cordial concurrence in the plan proposed by his noble Friend; and he trusted that in any future discussion hon. Members would abstain from those personal altercations and that venting of calumnies which could tend neither to raise them in the opinion of the people of England, nor to facilitate the transaction of the business of the House.

MR. WARBURTON saw no occasion for asperity in discussing a question of the kind before the House. The question really was, whether the sober, industrious, people of England would approve of a scheme for advancing sixteen millions of money for the construction of railroads in Ireland. He entirely approved of the decision come to by the Government, that they would not, on the present occasion, engage in a scheme for the advancement of that sum. There was no occasion for the House to consider or debate whether under any circumstances the Government should do so. Occasions might occur when, for military purposes, or for purposes of police, it might be expedient for the Government to pledge the credit of England for the completion of those railways. But when would such an occasion arise? Why, when the barns were full of corn, when there was a sufficiency of eatables and drinkables in the possession of the people, and when, besides having the capital necessary for supplying the agriculture of the country, there was so large a surplus remaining that they could safely divert it to undertakings that were not likely to be immediately productive. What were the circumstances, however, in which they now found themselves? They found that nearly half the food of Ireland was gone, and that if the Irish people were to be at all employed by the Government, it should be in producing a supply of food at the next harvest. He asked, would the turning up of the soil on a number of railroads produce barley, or oats, or wheat, for the consumption of the Irish people next autumn, and for the whole of the ensuing year? It would not; and how then could they ask for the investment of sixteen millions of money at a period like the present, when the works for which it was demanded would not be immediately productive. He would say that the Government would be destitute of common sense if they engaged in an undertaking of that sort. He would admit, if they pleased, that there was a surplus of capital in this country; but at a time when so much of that surplus was required for the maintenance of the Irish people—when such extraordinary demands were made on the English public for feeding the Irish people, not only for this year, but perhaps for years to come—if there were a surplus of capital existing, it was clear that such a surplus should be expended in a manner that would produce the largest return possible, in order to meet these demands; whereas, according to their own account, it was necessary to borrow money for Irish railways at as low a rate as possible, because they would not be very remunerative. It was for these reasons that he was entirely opposed to any employment of Irish labour with English capital on works that could not be immediately productive.

The CHANCELLOR OF THE EXCHEQUER: Although there are many topics that have been introduced in the course of this debate, on which I should be glad to make some observations, yet as I rise principally for the purpose of making an appeal to those hon. Gentlemen who have shown a disposition to prolong the debate, and to request them to abstain, as far as possible, from so doing, I think it necessary to set them a good example in that respect; and I will, therefore, refrain from making any remarks on those topics. The noble Lord opposite, in the course of his very able speech, detailed the plan which he proposes; and my noble Friend (Lord John Russell) stated in his speech the course which he thinks it advisable to take, not only on the present, but on future occasions when the question may come before the House. As, therefore, no possible question can arise previous to the noble Lord laying his measure on the Table, and as the noble Lord will, of course, remember that we have a measure standing for this night, which is for the practical and immediate relief of the Irish people, I would appeal to him and to hon. Gentlemen to allow this discussion to close now, and to waste no farther time and interpose no farther delay in the way of a measure which all admit to be requisite, in affording immediate relief to the pressing necessities of that country.

Mr. GOULBURN did not rise for the purpose of prolonging the debate; but as the right hon. Gentleman who had just sat down stated that the noble Lord at the head of Her Majesty's Government had distinctly announced the course which he would take when the Bill came before the House again, and as he understood from some hon. Gentleman near him, that the course to be taken by the noble Lord was by no means so distinctly known and understood as the right hon. Gentleman supposed; he thought that before the debate closed, it was most essential for the House to be further informed on the subject, which, though understood by the right hon. Gentleman the Chancellor of the Exchequer, was, he believed, not understood by the House generally. He said this because it appeared to him that, leaving a question involving such large pecuniary interests, and which might lead to great speculations that were likely to be affected by the proceedings in that House on this measure in uncertainty, was a course that was open to the greatest possible objection both as regarded the speculations to which it might lead, and as regarded the interests of the very works that were intended to be promoted by the measure; for who would advance his money for such works, or even continue to conduct them, under present circumstances, without a distinct knowledge of the course which the Government would take regarding that Bill? The sole object, therefore, that he had in rising was, to call on the noble Lord to make that clear which to some hon. Members in the House appeared to be obscure, by exactly explaining the course he was prepared to take on a matter so intimately connected with the pecuniary concerns of great interests, as well as with the general welfare of the country.

Lord JOHN RUSSELL: I will at once answer the appeal of the right hon. Gentleman, by restating what I said before, though I fear in a manner which was not perfectly understood by him, and some other hon. Gentlemen near him. I stated to the House that I thought it was respectful to my noble Friend—and certainly I am confirmed in that opinion on reflection—to allow him to introduce his Bill; but I stated that on a further stage of the measure, when my noble Friend had introduced his Bill—when, according to the forms of the House, it would be necessary that the House should go into Committee for the purpose of approving of the advance of money, in order to carry out the provisions of the Bill, that on such an occasion, it would be, I thought, incumbent on Her Majesty's Government either to take on itself the duty of carrying that plan into operation, or at once to put our negative on the proposition. I did not think it would be fair or right for the Government of the country to stand by, to give a mere formal sanction to the measure, and allow my noble Friend to proceed with his Bill. I stated further, that I was not prepared—whatever may be the course which Her Majesty's Government might take with regard to railways, that I was not prepared—to carry that plan into effect which my noble Friend proposed; and that when he applied to the House for the purpose of receiving its authority in the manner I mentioned, I should, on the part of Her Majesty's Government, refuse my consent to it.

Mr. SMITH O'BRIEN agreed with the right hon. Gentleman the Chancellor of the Exchequer, that not an hour should be lost in considering the Bills fixed for Committee that night; but at the same time he could not see that any part of the time occupied in the debate of that evening had been wasted. The hon. Member for Bath, in his plan for remedying the present misery in Ireland, robbed the hon. Member for Stroud of his peculiar plan; while on his own part he wished to impose a property tax in Ireland, in order to give them relief there, while the third measure which he recommended was one that passed through Parliament two years ago. As to the Motion before the House, he should express his surprise at the course taken by the noble Lord the Member for the city of London, in refusing to lend the credit of the Government—for it was nothing else—to the extent of sixteen millions, being at the rate of four millions a year, when the object to be attained was of the utmost importance; and when the political opponent of the noble Lord was willing to come forward and to give all his support for carrying that and the other measures of relief that were considered necessary. It appeared that no measure of relief was to be applied to Ireland unless it was known to be utterly unproductive. The noble Lord said, he did not care what the effect of his measures were on Ireland, as his object was solely to feed the people. [Lord John Russell: No, no.] He was glad that he had misconceived the noble Lord; but he would like to know how the 500,000 labourers were to be fed? What happened with the county with which he was connected? The landlords and ratepayers were unanimous in thinking that railways should be undertaken in preference to road-making. They saw that their money was about being expended on unproductive works, and they said, "Let us take charge of railway works ourselves, and take our chance hereafter of obtaining the assent of Parliament to sell them." There was not a landed proprietor in the country who was not ready to give his land on these terms; but when the matter was submitted to the Treasury for their approval, the reply was, "Oh, no, we must have unproductive works." If the terms which the landlords and ratepayers proposed had been accepted, they would very willingly have paid the entire amount advanced to them back. Whereas the Government were now willing to forgive them one-half, and yet this was what was called "economy." The noble Lord said, that the money advanced for railways would not support the destitute. Undoubtedly the railway labourers would not be the old men, or—as he saw in Clare—the young women, who were employed on the roads; but he asked, would it be no advantage to have 110,000 able-bodied labourers taken off their hands to be employed on profitable and productive works without any expense to the Government or to the country? The Government which would give support to the people, and would save them from starvation, was the Government that would and ought to be supported by the people of Ireland.

Mr. LABOUCHERE said, he could assure the House that it was with the utmost reluctance that he interposed for a single moment to protract the conclusion of that debate, because he quite agreed with his right hon. Friend the Chancellor of the Exchequer, that it was exceedingly desirable a subject of such a nature as a discussion on railways should be terminated as soon as possible, in order that they might pass to those measures that were calculated to provide an immediate remedy for the destitution of Ireland. But the hon. Gentleman who had just sat down, having made some statements of the most extraordinary character, he felt that it was impossible to leave them without making a few remarks on what the hon. Gentleman had said. The hon. Gentleman stated, that his noble Friend the Member for the city of London had said that his principle was to encourage no works in Ireland except those that were of a useless and unproductive nature. Why, could it have escaped the recollection of the hon. Gentleman—he was sure it could not have escaped the recollection of the House—that the main measure which his noble Friend had brought forward, and on which he and the other Members of Her Majesty's Government looked as likely to be productive of the greatest advantage to Ireland at the present moment, and on which they were ready to advance the credit of England for the benefit of that country to an extent of no less than one and a half million, was a measure to enable the landlords of Ireland to give support to the people, and to alleviate the immediate distress, while it laid the foundation of a supply of food at the next and future harvests? He thought it required a power of mis-statement the most extraordinary, to allow the hon. Gentleman to state, under these circumstances, that it was the object of Her Majesty's Government, and of his noble Friend, to encourage none but useless works in Ireland, or that they were not ready, where they could do so on safe and solid grounds, and with a confidence that the money would not go into the hands of speculators, to give reasonable encouragement to works of a productive nature. But the hon. Gentleman made another statement which was extremely calculated to mislead the House. The hon. Gentleman said that in his own country the Government refused to sanction railway works that were presented for at sessions. The hon. Gentleman, however, forgot to tell the House what the circumstances were under which that refusal took place. He would ask the House, could the Government feel itself authorized to make advances of the public money to allow the hon. Gentleman and his neighbours to construct a railway for which no Act had ever passed that House, and for which no Act of Parliament existed? He thought it would be inexcusable in the Government to do such a thing; but the hon. Gentleman did them wrong in saying that they were not willing to allow the earthworks of railways to be made on advances of the public money in all cases. The course to be pursued in such cases was distinctly laid down in a Treasury Minute issued on the 16th of October, 1846, which was now on the Table of the House. It commenced as follows:—

> "Transmit copies of these memorials to the Commissioners of Public Works, and state that their Lordships are prepared to give their sanction to baronial presentments for the execution of railway earthworks, as relief works under the Act 9 and 10 Vic., c. 107, subject to the following conditions."

He would not delay the House by reading all these conditions, but one of them was, in substance, that the money should be advanced to execute the earthworks of such railways only for which Acts of Parliament had passed. He thought it would be a most unjustifiable act on the part of Her Majesty's Government to give its sanction to the expenditure of the public money on any other conditions, or to take it upon themselves to say where a railway ought to be made, when no plan for it had been sanctioned by the Legislature. Such a course would have led to so much confusion, that he thought the House would perceive at once that it was impossible they could have taken it. He had to ask the pardon of the House for trespassing upon their time even so far; and really nothing save the statement of the hon. Gentleman would have induced him to come forward at all, for he believed the House would agree with him, that as little delay as possible should be thrown in the way of measures that were of immediate necessity.

The MARQUESS of GRANBY said, it was not his intention to delay the House. He confessed that for his part he did not think that railways in general were an unmitigated good. He believed that they had their evil as well as their good points; but, at the same time, he thought that if ever there was a country where all the benefits and but few of the evils attending on railways was likely to be felt from their construction, that country was Ireland. He also thought that if ever there was a time when it would be beneficial to introduce them into that country, that time was the present. He might add, that if he ever had any doubts on these points, they had been removed by the able and clear statement of his noble Friend the Member for Lynn. He believed the principal objection of the noble Lord the Member for London to the measure was, that it would not supply food to the people; but he thought they ought to endeavour, not only to remedy the present evil, but to prevent, as far as possible, a recurrence of it in future.

MR. MUNTZ would answer the question of the hon. Member for Kendal (Mr. Warburton), as to the time when the money of England ought to be applied to the service of Ireland. It was when our poor fellow-subjects in that country were starving, and literally dying for want of food. Extraordinary difficulties required extraordinary remedies. Though it might not be in strict accordance with the doctrines of political economy that money should be advanced by the Government, as urged by the noble Lord opposite, it would be better, in his opinion, to deviate from the principles of political economy in order to feed the people. Charity in that House, and in the country, seemed to depend upon the colour of the skin. How long was it since twenty millions had been voted for the emancipation of the negro slaves? That money had not been lent, but absolutely given; yet, now, when four or five millions of poor Irishmen were dying, literally perishing of starvation, the Government were pleading the strict letter of political economy, urging the closest point of expediency, and considering whether the interests of the country, in a pecuniary sense, were not superior to the health or the death of hundreds and thousands of individuals. This was not a question of giving; it was a question of lending: and the only point to be guarded against was an excess of railways. An excess of railways would not only be an injury to Ireland, but to England. The noble Lord at the head of the Government said he wanted to feed the people. This was a very proper feeling; but would the noble Lord's plan feed all the people who wanted food now? Would not the noble Lord be throwing the whole summer away? How many millions had already been disposed of, and were still to be disposed of? According to the confession of all, many millions would be lost; but here there was a plan which would feed millions at once, by employing them; and at the same time promote the permanent improvement and prosperity of the country.

MR. W. R. COLLETT thought that the most immediate way of giving employment to the Irish people, and relieving them in their present distressing condition, was by the encouraging the making of railways, which would prove to be far more beneficial than either draining or poor laws. If the Government would only express their approbation of such a proposition, he would engage to have 50,000 able-bodied Irishmen, who represented on an average 200,000 persons, removed from off the roads carried on by the Board of Works by Monday next, and placed upon the Irish railways. He was free to admit that the Government had devoted much attention to the subject of Irish relief, but still they were obliged to appeal to the united wisdom of the Legislature for its advice. The Legislature now gave them its advice by supporting the present proposition. He did not care for being taunted for his advocacy of railways. He could only say that all those in which he was interested would be carried out without the assistance of the Government. Although they could take five years in their formation, the Government would cause them to be done in one year. He would take this opportunity of thanking the noble Lord the Member for Lynn for his exertions upon this subject; and he would state this fact to his credit, that although there was no person in the House more directly interested in Irish railways than himself, and none from whom (without boasting he would say) he could gain more valuable information, yet the noble Lord had never mentioned his intentions to him until he had actually brought forward his Bill. The country, however, would not fail to appreciate his motives. He did not know any speech that would be read so generally, and with such intense interest in Ireland, as that of the noble Lord the Member for Lynn. Some hon. Members might screen themselves from the obloquy of opposing the present measure, by saying that they would be no party to speculation. Why should such an excuse be permitted to interfere with such a grand measure as this? Those railways should have been undertaken years ago. But that was no reason why they should not be undertaken now. If they were bad boys, why should they be bad men? It was not too late for Government to do with the Irish railways as had been done by the Governments of France, Belgium, and elsewhere. He might be told that he was a great Irish railway proprietor. Why he should be perfectly willing to hand over to the Government at par all his shares in the Irish lines. The noble Lord at the head of the Government said that he did not wish to interfere now with these undertakings. The noble Lord should not hesitate in giving the Irish railways the support of the Government, for he could buy them all up at par. As far as he was concerned, so far from connecting himself with them as mere matters of speculation, he could assure the House that he did not hope to derive any profit whatever from them. He was connected with numerous Irish undertakings, not with the view of profit, but from a solid conviction of the security of his capital and the fertility of the soil. If the Government would but say that they were ready to appoint a committee and officers to work a great Irish railway, he (Mr. Collett) could afford them one in Tipperary. Let them try their hands at that work, and they would find how much better they would be acting than by cutting and destroying roads in Wexford, Limerick, and other parts of the country. If the noble Lord at the head of the Government would only consent to such a proposition as was now before the House, he would write over forthwith to Mr. Darby his instructions to take 50,000 men from off the shoulders of the Board of Works on Monday next. He would have 5,000 of them placed upon the railway from Dundalk to Enniskillen, 7,000 upon the Belfast Junction line, 5,000 upon the Drogheda line, several thousands on the most distressed parts of Cork and Tipperary, and 2,000 or 3,000 in Carlow and Kilkenny. Careless of deriving any profit by them, he would still stand by the Irish railways, whether the Government sanctioned them or not. And he would say, like Sir Hugh Middleton, after he had lost all his fortune by the undertaking with which he was connected—he did not care if he benefited the country.

MR. M. GORE was anxious to call the attention of the Government and of the House to one point materially connected with Irish railways, whatever system it might be the intention of the House to sanction. He thought that they would constitute a material means to promote the fisheries in Ireland, and thereby the essential welfare and prosperity of the country. He had a letter from a Roman Catholic priest, in a place in Galway, stating that the population consisted of many hundred persons, who were at the present moment totally destitute of employment; and he believed that the extension of railways in Ireland would tend to the employment of the population by opening regular and good markets for the fisheries, which markets at present, from the want of proper internal communication, did not exist. In conclusion, he expressed his gratification at the speech of the noble Lord (Lord G. Bentinck), feeling confident that a policy founded on the sentiments expressed towards Ireland by the noble Lord would tend strongly to cement the union between the two countries.

Mr. GROGAN said, that as the right hon. Secretary for Ireland had referred to the Treasury Minute, he wished to state why that minute had proved a dead letter. In its substance it was very good; but there were so many qualifications and restrictions attached to it that it was rendered totally inoperative.

Mr. M. J. O'CONNELL said, that after what had passed that night, he feared it was doubtful whether there would be any opportunity of discussing the proposition now brought forward hereafter; and he deeply regretted that the Government had not given a more fair consideration to the proposal. If he thought the proposition would endanger the finances of the country, he should be as unwilling to press it on the House as any English or Scotch Member, under such circumstances, could be; but he believed that, with the safeguards with which the noble Lord had fenced his proposition, all danger to the finances of the country would be avoided. The revision which the noble Lord proposed over the works rendered the payment of the interest of the loan as certain as the payment of any interest could be made. With respect to the observations which had fallen from the hon. and learned Member for Bath, he would say, that though the Irish Members might feel indignation whilst listening to his attacks, that feeling soon afterwards yielded to one of pity. The hon. and learned Member seemed to think that his only chance of being listened to consisted in attacking somebody, or everybody. Thersites was listened to among the Greeks because he assailed all persons; and the hon. and learned Member had the consolation of being listened to by the House when he made bitter speeches; but those who might at first feel resentment at his attacks were afterwards more inclined to compassionate them.

Mr. GEORGE A. HAMILTON said, he was unwilling to occupy the time of the House. But the subject was one of great importance to Ireland, and the measure, he believed, more calculated than any measure yet proposed to render a permanent benefit to that country. He must confirm the statement made by his hon. Friend (Mr. Grogan) with regard to its being almost impossible for companies to take advantage of the Treasury Minute, authorizing advances on the credit of presentments for the earthworks of railways. At his (Mr. Hamilton's) instance a large presentment had been made for the earthworks of a railway between Drogheda and Navan—for a railway for which an Act had been obtained: the company and the county were most anxious to take advantage of it; but on conferring with the engineers and contractors, and persons the most conversant with such matters, they had been obliged to abandon it. The conditions were such as could not be complied with. [The Chancellor of the Exchequer: Which of the conditions?] Why, in the first place, the condition which exacted pauper labour. Then it was required that the company should give security to the barony, which security the company had no power by law to give. Perhaps these conditions were necessary, but they rendered the Treasury Minute delusive. He (Mr. Hamilton) was the more unwilling to take part in this debate, because he entered very fully into the considerations which had prompted the noble Lord near him to refrain from consulting any Irish Member in reference to his measure, for fear of its being regarded as what was called an Irish job. He (Mr. Hamilton) wished he could express adequately how revolting it was to the feelings of honourable men who were connected with Ireland, whenever any proposition was brought forward, with regard to that country, to find themselves accused, as the hon. Member for Bath accused them, of being actuated by selfish and mercenary motives. He did not know by what standard the hon and learned Gentleman judged of the honour, and integrity, and independence of others; but he must say, when he talked of proposing such a clause as that which he had spoken of, that no Irish Member should receive for his land any part of the money proposed to be lent to railways, he imputed to them that which was inconsistent with honour, integrity, or independence. The measure of the noble Lord was founded upon the principle of working the resources of Ireland, by the aid of English credit available for the improvement of Ireland. For himself he must say he had urged the adoption of the principle long ago upon the Irish Government. More than a year ago, when the first appearance of the failure of the potato crop was detected, and its consequences foreseen, he (Mr. Hamilton) had waited with a deputation from the Royal Irish Agricultural Society upon Sir Thomas Fremantle, then Secretary for Ireland, and had implored the Government to take means in time for the profitable employment of the people. He, therefore, and those with whom he acted, had at least done their duty. The hon. and learned Member for Bath, as appeared to him, had totally misunderstood the plan of the noble Lord. He had accused the noble Lord of proposing to add to the taxation of England. Why, the measure of the noble Lord would have an exactly opposite effect. It was the object of the noble Lord, as he understood him, to save the people of England from taxation on account of Ireland. It was the only measure yet proposed which would have that effect. The House should recollect that there was at the present time an army of 500,000 men employed in Ireland, paid in a great degree by the State. It would prove more difficult than hon. Members were aware to disband that army. The measure of the noble Lord would have that effect. No doubt the Drainage Act, and other measures of Government, were useful; but in six weeks from this time, the period for drainage would be over. What was to be done with this army then? And even with regard to the tillage of the land, it was stated in the report of the Poor Inquiry Commissioners, in 1836, that there were five agricultural labourers in Ireland, for three in England. This extra number was usually employed in the cultivation of the potato; but that cultivation being now at an end, some extraordinary employment must be provided for them. The measure of the noble Lord was eminently calculated to afford that employment; and the noble Lord did not propose that the credit of England should be lent otherwise than on good security. He threw the whole responsibility of the security upon the railway companies. The noble Lord had dwelt strongly upon the effect which this measure would have upon the condition of the Irish peasantry. He (Mr. Hamilton) would ask the attention of the House, while he read some extracts from the evidence of a most eminent engineer, fully conversant with Ireland, who had charge of most of the railways in that country—he meant Sir John Macneill. It was upon this very subject. The hon. and learned Gentleman the Member for Bath had given, a few nights ago, a fearful picture of the ordinary condition of the Irish peasantry. Now hear what Sir John Macneill says with regard to the effect upon that class of great railway works. It was usually objected to railway works that the people employed on them were not the people of the country. Sir John Macneill, in his evidence before the Land Commission, says—

> "In England there are few instances of farming labourers going on railway works in their immediate neighbourhood. In Ireland the case is different: every man runs to the contractor to get his name on the list. It is extraordinary the avidity with which they seek to be employed. When they come to work they are generally in great distress—badly clothed and fed. Wherever the works are carried on, the people improve—they see the manner in which works are carried on in a legitimate and regular way, besides the habit of being obliged to eat better meat and drink (and they cannot work as required if they do not) improves their condition; they try afterwards to go on in the same way, and will save in other things to get better clothes and meat."

Sir John Macneill is asked—

> "Do you find an improvement in their habits, corresponding with their condition?—Yes, decidedly so; as soon as an Irishman gets a little better in his circumstances, and gets out of the state of misery they are generally in, they commence to get clothes, and when tolerably well dressed, they become totally different characters, and they are men you can trust and depend upon; few quarrels then take place among them. Is it your opinion that the power of bettering themselves by those public railway works, creates the strongest desire for improvement?—Yes, the strongest. It is visible in their cottages; they make them better and more comfortable. They are better clothed themselves, they clothe their children better. Among those that have learned to work better, do you detect anything like listlessness or carelessness?—No; nothing of the kind. An Irishman is the most active fellow possible if remunerated for his work; there is no idleness among them, if they can turn the work to a fair remuneration. Do you attribute that improvement to the stimulus of increased wages?—Yes; that is the true cause: it is also the effect of a man feeling a little independence—he is anxious to continue to improve his condition and that of his children. No man will do more, or undergo more hardship, for the sake of his children than an Irishman."

This evidence, coming from a man of the known character and experience of Sir John Macneill, would prove he (Mr. Hamilton) thought, more strongly than anything he could say how rightly the noble Lord had judged, and how well calculated his measure would be to raise and improve the social condition of Ireland.

CAPTAIN HARRIS approved of the proposal made to the House, as likely to facilitate the progress of manufactures and promote the prosperity of Ireland.

MR. P. BUTLER trusted the Government would reconsider the subject. In his own locality, if railways were not proceeded with, 2,500 able-bodied men would be thrown out of employ in less than two months. The measure, whether brought forward by the noble Lord the Member for Lynn (Lord G. Bentinck), or by Her Majesty's Government, should have his most unqualified support.

LORD J. MANNERS thought it right, after the observations of the hon. Member for Bath, to say, that it was the intention of the noble Lord, and of the Gentlemen who were acting with him, to persevere with this Bill. He did most sincerely and earnestly trust, that, should this House of Parliament pass, by a majority, the second reading of the Bill, Her Majesty's Ministers would not think it incumbent upon them to interpose the prerogative of the Crown, and prevent this measure, which the Irish people, and, he believed, the English people, regarded as a great boon, from becoming the law of the land.

SIR H. VERNER expressed his approbation of the proposition which had been laid before the House. In reference to the operation of the Drainage Act, he begged to state that at a presentment sessions he had undertaken to expend 600*l*. towards draining land upon his own property under the conditions of that measure; but having applied on the 4th of November, he had not yet got any satisfactory assurance from the Board of Works to enable him to commence operations.

Motion agreed to.

On the Question that Lord G. Bentinck, with others, be appointed to bring in the Bill,

MR. ROEBUCK requested the House to listen to him for not more than five minutes while he gave an answer to some observations which had fallen from several hon. Gentleman; and he addressed himself, first, to the hon. Member for Kerry. When that hon. Gentleman sat down, he (Mr. Roebuck) took the liberty to turn round, and said, "May I take the liberty of asking, whether you heard the speech I made this afternoon?" "Some of it," replied the hon. Gentleman; "but I confess I took the greater part of it on credit." So all the compassion, all the feelings the hon. Gentleman had for him was, "on credit." That was precisely the sort of way in which all Gentlemen were accustomed to deal with others, who were, he was afraid, careless in their modes of assertion. He appealed to the House to recollect the manner and language of his address. He had a very strong objection to the employment of money in the way proposed by the noble Lord. He had stated his reasons for that opinion, saying, that he sincerely believed it would be doing mischief to the people of England, and no good to the people of Ireland. He had gone on to say, what he sincerely believed, that Ireland had suffered immense injury from appealing to the generosity of that House, instead of trusting to herself; and he could not help feeling that, as no immediate benefit could arise in the way of immediate relief to the poor of Ireland, this measure could only have a beneficial effect upon the landed proprietors of that country. He had stated his opinion, as he now did, plainly, simply, and without circumlocution, as was his habit, without one harsh phrase or one harsh word. [MR. OSBORNE: You said you would propose to put a clause in the Bill.] He considered it of the greatest importance for the dignity of that House that its Members should be entirely above suspicion, and that none of the money intended for the people of Ireland should be partitioned among persons having a seat in that House or the other. In regard to the remarks of the hon. Member for Meath, he was not accusing the hon. Gentleman of running away; but if he wanted, in a word, to characterize the hon. Gentleman's speech properly, he should say that it was a "frantic" speech. He asked the House whether he had employed a single phrase that could possibly warrant the wholesale vials of wrath that had been poured over his head. He now repeated what he had said then, that he had a duty which he owed to his constituents. He had been reproved for not doing his duty as a Member of that House to Ireland; but he had also other duties towards those whom he represented. The hon. Gentleman had accused him of malignity, and had at the same time styled him a "shrivelled adder." The hon. Gentleman had condescended to expend his sarcasms upon his (Mr. Roebuck's) unfortunate form—a thing that he should be ashamed to do in return. Yes, the hon. Gentleman had called him "a shrivelled adder." Was that not "a frantic exhibition of impotent indignation?" The adder could bite and sting, and the poor ox that he did sting felt the small reptile to be a very dangerous enemy. But the sting of what he had said had not been in the sharpness of his phrase, or the mode in which he had chosen to put it, but in the truth of his assertions. He had always found that when he wanted to drive anything sharp home, when he wanted it to bite, he edged it with truth. That was the way to make it hang, and he felt that he had hit the white mark on this occasion, because certain hon. Gentlemen felt it so strongly, and became so angry.

Colonel RAWDON could assure the hon. and learned Gentleman, that this was not a time when words like those to which he had given utterance could be expressed with impunity. Such words were very dangerous. It was not in the United Parliament, and before the assembled Commons, that the Irish representatives should be addressed in language, or have such language applied to them, as they had heard that night. As to the hon. Gentleman the Member for Kerry, who had been referred to, not having heard the speech of the hon. and learned Member for Bath, but having taken it partly on credit; he could tell the hon. and learned Member that he, for one, had imparted his impressions of the speech of the hon. and learned Member to the Member for Kerry. He had not been himself so fortunate as to catch the Speaker's eye; but if he had, he certainly should have given utterance to the strong feelings of indignation with which he had heard the words addressed to, and the aspersions cast upon, the Irish Members by the hon. and learned Member for Bath. He asked whether Gentlemen with hearts within them could hear themselves, as such proprietors, accused of an intention to put public money in their pockets; and that this intention was to be defeated by the hon. and learned Member for Bath introducing a clause into the proposed Bill, by which no landed proprietor should appropriate any of the public money to his own purposes. Was there anything ever said more insulting than this? and, under the circumstances of Ireland, could anything be more dangerous? He was very sorry to hear such expressions; but it was not the first time the hon. and learned Member had said that which was dangerous. It was not the first time the hon. and learned Member had said that which was dangerous to England; for he had heard, and he mentioned it with all due respect for the House, that the hon. and learned Member for Bath was strongly suspected of having been the hired advocate for rebels—["Order!"] He was ready to submit if he was out of order.

Mr. SPEAKER called the hon. Member to order.

Colonel RAWDON said, he was sorry if he had transgressed the rules of the House, and resumed his seat.

Mr. F. FRENCH observed, that the hon. and learned Member for Bath seemed to have benefited considerably by the discussion that had taken place. That beneficial effect was demonstrated in the alteration of his tone. He could assure the hon. and learned Member, that if his allusions to Ireland were for the future to be in the tone and temper of the speech in which he had lately addressed the House, then he would find that he himself would, as far as the Irish Members were concerned, have nothing to complain of.

Mr. H. GRATTAN did not mean to say that the hon. and learned Member for Bath might not feel that he did but that which was his duty; but then he asked whether it was the duty of one hon. Member to charge another with the intention of putting public money into his pocket? He might well say that no public money had come into his pocket, nor was it likely to do so, whatever might occur. He remembered to have heard Mr. Tierney charged by Sir Francis Burdett with having his pockets stuffed with public money. He rather thought that the predecessor of the Speaker called Sir F. Burdett to order on that occasion; and he remembered Mr. Tierney afterwards attacking Sir F. Burdett in his place, and giving him a very good "jobation." And now he must say, that he thought the hon. and learned Member for Bath ought for his attack on the Irish Members to get a good "jobation." He hoped, after what had occurred, that the hon. and learned Member for Bath would not renew these idle discussions. Such childish nonsensical matters might do for Bath, but were not fitted for the House of Commons.

Bill brought in and read a first time.

DESTITUTE POOR (IRELAND).

On the Order of the Day for going into Committee of the whole House,

Viscount CLEMENTS called the attention of the House to a recent letter of the right hon. Gentlemen the Secretary for the Home Department, for the purpose of entering his protest against the police having anything to do with the relief committees. It would be to take them from their proper duties to put them to others for which they were unfitted.

MR. LABOUCHERE said, that in the letter referred to it was announced that the head of the constabulary force in Ireland should form one of the central superintending committee; and he would add, that that appointment had been made by the Government, not merely because, as the head of the constabulary, he must necessarily be a most useful and important member of that committee, but also because the character of Colonel M'Gregor stood so high in Ireland, he was so generally respected, as to render it unnecessary for him (Mr. Labouchere) to pass any eulogium upon him.

VISCOUNT CLEMENTS disclaimed any intention of saying anything touching on Colonel M'Gregor's character, of whom no person, either in or out of the House, could entertain a higher opinion than he did.

The Order of the Day read. House in Committee of the whole House.

The CHANCELLOR OF THE EXCHEQUER moved—

> " That provision be made out of the Consolidated Fund of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland, for Advances, not exceeding 300,000*l.* by way of Loan to the Relief Commissioners appointed in pursuance of any Act for the temporary relief of Destitute Persons in Ireland."

The right hon. Gentleman stated, that the sums to be applied to the relief of the poor consisted partly of money raised by rates, and partly of subscriptions; but, as the collection of those rates was not likely to be speedy, it was proposed to advance the money till they were collected. There would be a subsequent clause in the Bill, authorizing the whole grant, which he proposed to move from time to time in Committee of Supply during the Session.

MR. P. SCROPE said, as this money was to be secured on the rates, the collection of which depended on the exertions of the Poor Law Commissioners, who were to have a power to supersede the boards of guardians if they did not collect them, and to appoint paid boards of guardians; and as he had a very strong opinion that the conduct of the Commissioners as to the collection of the rates had been very lax, particularly in the Castlebar union, where the people died in great numbers, because the rates were not collected; he wished to know whether the present Commissioners were to carry the Act into execution, or whether there was to be any alteration before the Bill came into operation.

SIR G. GREY said, it was not intended to make any alterations before the Act came into operation; but he hoped that the Act would pass immediately, and come into operation in a very short time. The power given to the Commission by this Bill to dissolve the boards of guardians in certain cases was one they did not now possess; and in the Castlebar case they must have gone through the intermediate process of another election, so that they could not have had a paid board of guardians in less than two months. The provisions of this Bill gave them the power of so appointing them at once.

MR. P. SCROPE inquired whether, in case of delay, the Commissioners were responsible to the right hon. Gentleman, or to Parliament. The right hon. Gentleman's recent letter seemed to say that they would be responsible to Parliament.

SIR G. GREY said, the hon. Gentleman had misunderstood the letter, which disclaimed on the part of the Government the right to prescribe to the Poor Law Commissioners the mode in which they should discharge the functions vested in them by law; but he had never intended to say that the Commissioners were responsible directly to Parliament. They were, however, removable by the Crown; and if the Government thought that they failed in their duty, it would be for them to advise their dismissal.

VISCOUNT CLEMENTS inquired what means had been used to provide boilers?

The CHANCELLOR OF THE EXCHEQUER said, a number had been sent out in the Admiralty steamers, and a great number of boiling pots belonging to the Ordnance Department had been put at the disposal of the relief committees.

Resolution agreed to. House resumed, and adjourned at Twelve o'clock.

HOUSE OF LORDS,

Friday, February 5, 1847.

MINUTES.] PUBLIC BILLS.—2ª Buck Wheat, &c. Importation.

PETITIONS PRESENTED. From Stockbridge, for the Repeal of the Poor Removal Act.

RAILWAYS IN IRELAND.

LORD BROUGHAM moved—

> " For a Return of the Premium on Exchequer Bills on each Day from the 1st of February to the 5th of February, 1847. Also an Account of

the Dividends actually paid upon all Railway Stock in England, Scotland, and Ireland, for the two Years ending the 1st of February, 1847. Also an Account of the Names of all Persons holding Stock in Irish Railways on the 1st of February, 1847."

The noble and learned Lord observed, that as a return of this kind had been granted with reference to railways in this country, he presumed there could be no objection to place the proprietors of Irish railway stock on the same footing with shareholders in similar undertakings in England. He saw that a measure had been introduced into the other House of Parliament for the promotion of railways in Ireland; and that measure was advocated on the ground that it would enable Irish railway shareholders to turn their shares into money, which might be applied in advancing the general welfare of that country. But those who supported this measure seemed to forget that for every 100*l.* of capital withdrawn from railway shares, another 100*l.* would be invested in those speculations; so that he did not think the result they anticipated would be produced. At any rate, let it be known for whose benefit Parliament was about to legislate. He was sorry at all times to complain of misrepresentation; indeed he was seldom called upon to do so; but these were times when the opinions of a public man ought to be properly understood. Since he had last addressed their Lordships, he had received numerous letters charging him with a desire to make bread dear for the people, and accusing him of taking part with the farmers to keep up the price of bread. And the poor farmers were to be charged with this! They were charged with keeping up the price of bread by withholding supplies from the market. He could only say that a more unjust and ridiculous accusation he never heard against any class of the community. It was important, especially at this time, that the opinions of men on such a subject should not be misrepresented; and he might therefore explain that what he had said was this, that if there was no scarcity, corn would very soon come to the market, and so be cheap; and that, if there was a scarcity, the best thing that could possibly happen would be that corn should be dear. The Duke of Norfolk, or the Duke of Rutland, to whom it signified little what the price of corn was, could, in a period of dearth, reduce the consumption of their families by a certain amount: the community at large, however, could not enter into a bond to effect such a reduction; but a high price would operate upon them, and would prevent a scarcity from being changed into a dearth, and a dearth from becoming a famine.

Lord STANLEY entirely concurred in the observation of his noble and learned Friend, that this was a time, of all others, when public men ought not to be subjected to misrepresentation with regard to their motives, and particularly when their motives and actions had reference to the relief of public distress, in whatever part of the empire that distress might exist. It was his entire concurrence in that observation which led him to notice a remark that fell from the noble and learned Lord, conveying, unintentionally of course, an entire misrepresentation of the motives and intent of the measure which had been introduced by a noble Friend of his (Lord Stanley's) into the other House of Parliament. His noble and learned Friend had stated that the object of his noble Friend (Lord George Bentinck) was to introduce a measure, the effect of which would be to raise the price of Irish railway shares, and enable railway proprietors to make large profits.

Lord BROUGHAM: No; the effect, no doubt, would be to raise the prices; but the intention was, to enable shareholders to sell out, and to improve their estates.

Lord STANLEY: The noble and learned Lord intimated, at all events, that the object of the measure introduced by his noble Friend (Lord George Bentinck) last night, in the other House of Parliament, was to advantage railway proprietors in Ireland, by enabling them to sell the shares they possessed. Now, he was certain that his noble and learned Friend could not have heard the able, the eloquent, the statesman-like statement delivered by his noble Friend (Lord George Bentinck) last night when introducing the Bill. He was convinced that his noble and learned Friend could not have read that statement; for, if he had done so, the monomania of opposition to railways, which in many cases biassed the judgment of his noble and learned Friend, could not have caused him to misunderstand the object of a measure which, whatever its intrinsic merits, was undoubtedly introduced with a feeling which commanded the attention and sympathy of all parties in Parliament, and which, he believed, also commanded the admiration and approval of a great portion of the community of this country. The time might come when that measure might have to be argued in their Lordships' House, unless some extraordinary exercise of the prerogative of the Crown should be made to stop its progress; but he must assure his noble and learned Friend, that its object and intent were not to raise the price of railway shares, or to facilitate their disposal by those who now held them in Ireland. The object of the measure was to interpose the credit of Great Britain—without the loss of one single shilling, or the imposition of one single shilling of taxation upon the people of this country—to stimulate and facilitate employment in a country more than all others, and especially at this time, in want of employment; to carry out works of great public utility, and which, without the intervention, not only of the aid, but of the credit of the State, must be abandoned; to facilitate communication in Ireland, which, next to the employment of labour, was most necessary to the well-being of the country; to improve the condition of the agricultural labourer in that country; and to furnish the means of constant employment to a large portion of the population for the next four years at least, without withdrawing them from agricultural employment by tendering too easy or too well-paid work; and to facilitate the application of capital—for the expenditure of private capital was now checked by the political position of the country. The intention of the measure was to render assistance to Ireland under securities and guarantees which would insure that the people of this country would not, by the advances which they would be called upon to make, be liable to one single shilling of ultimate expenditure, or to any immediate addition to their burdens, for the purpose of effecting what was proposed to be done by the interposition of the State. He had little thought to have said a word upon the subject at the present time; but with the respect and regard which he felt for his noble Friend in another place (Lord George Bentinck), and for the opinion and weight of authority of his noble and learned Friend in that House (Lord Brougham), he could not permit the statement which had been made to go forth upon the high authority of his noble and learned Friend, namely, that the scheme propounded by his noble Friend (Lord George Bentinck) had for its object private benefit, when his (Lord Stanley's) firm conviction, belief, and certainty was, that it had for its object, and would produce as its effect, great national improvement and great public advantage, and that without entailing public loss or inconvenience upon any portion of the subjects of this empire.

Lord BROUGHAM said, his noble Friend who had just addressed their Lordships had misunderstood the observation he had made. He (Lord Brougham) had never said that the measure introduced in another place was for the purpose of benefiting individuals. He expressly avoided making any such statement. What he had said was, that the measure of the noble Lord (Lord George Bentinck) had been supported on the ground that it would facilitate the application of capital to improvements in Ireland by enabling the holders of railway shares to dispose of them; and upon that fact he (Lord Brougham) remarked, that the persons who thus argued seemed to have forgotten that for every 100*l*. of capital sold out of railway stock, another 100*l*. must be invested, and that, consequently, the noble Lord's measure could not possibly have the effect it was intended to produce, namely, that of setting free any amount of capital to the general improvement of Ireland. His noble Friend (Lord Stanley) had observed that he (Lord Brougham) had not been present in the other House, for which he entertained as much respect as any one could do, when the noble Lord (Lord George Bentinck) brought forward the measure to which reference had been made. He (Lord Brougham) had certainly not heard the statement of the noble Lord, for he had not been in the other House since the 20th of November, 1830; and he had not read the statement, because he did not often read the debates. But he had seen a person who did hear the noble Lord's speech, and who told him that the friends of the measure—though he did not particularly mention the noble Lord—advocated it on the ground that it would enable the holders of railway shares to sell them, and would so give them an opportunity of investing their capital in labour fer the improvement of the land. His (Lord Brougham's) reply was, that a more Irish view of the subject he had never heard of; and he remarked, as he had already observed to their Lordships, that for every 100*l*. of stock sold out, another 100*l*. would be bought in. His object in moving for these returns was to put the sister kingdom on the same footing with this country; and, above all, to enable those Gentlemen in the other House, and those noble Lords who, in the multiplicity of their engagements, might forget that they held shares in Irish railways, to see their names alphabetically displayed, and so be reminded of their position. No one could expect that any noble Lord, or any hon. Member of the other House, would vote for a Bill that was to raise the value of his own shares. That was quite impossible. His noble Friend (Lord Stanley) had said that he had a monomania with regard to railways. What he (Lord Brougham) wanted was, that railways, like other similar undertakings, should be carried on by people from their own funds, and not with the aid of the public funds. He had no phobia whatever against railways: he risked his limbs on them every day; but if they were to be made, he wanted them to be made with the money of the shareholders, not that of the public. He had much less interest in the matter than his noble Friend (Lord Stanley), who had in all probability much longer to live than himself; but he could assure that noble Lord that he had no objection to railways or railway works in Ireland, and he hoped every facility would be afforded for their prosecution.

The DUKE of RICHMOND expressed the great satisfaction he had felt at the measure which had been proposed in another place last night by his noble Friend Lord George Bentinck. He thought it was a measure much more likely to be of permanent service to Ireland, than any measure that had ever been brought forward since he had occupied a seat in Parliament. The measure of his noble Friend appeared to him to begin at the right end; its object was to induce capital to flow from this country into Ireland. He believed that if they afforded employment to the people of Ireland, and gave them fair wages, they would do much to improve their moral condition; that the people would consume a much larger quantity of exciseable articles; that they would be able to live upon the produce of their own agriculture, and to purchase our manufactures, thereby extending that home market which, in his opinion, was the foundation of the prosperity of the great mass of the operatives of this country. He felt that there could be no objection to the production of the returns which had been moved for by the noble and learned Lord; and he hoped when they were produced, it would be found that there was a very large body of English and Scotch Members of Parliament who had nothing to do with railways who would carry the measure of his noble Friend (Lord George Bentinck). He entertained the firmest confidence that the people of England would well understand that they were not called upon to pay one single shilling by the measure of his noble Friend, which would give food to above 500,000 of the population of the sister kingdom, whose distresses they all deeply deplored. Temporary measures were necessary at this moment, but more permanent measures were also necessary to insure the prosperity of Ireland; and he thought his noble Friend (Lord George Bentinck) had shown himself to be a statesman by the Bill which he had last night introduced in a most forcible speech to the other House.

EARL FITZWILLIAM could not help regretting the tone which this conversation had taken, though he was not surprised at the tone of it, considering the nature of the Motion which had been made. It might occur, not to him, but a passing thought might glance through the minds of some of their Lordships, that his noble and learned Friend (Lord Brougham) might perhaps have some other sidelong view besides the mere view of placing before Parliament the names of those persons who were possessed of shares in Irish railways. When he looked that morning at the Votes of the House of Commons, he observed that a Bill had been presented for facilitating the employment of people in that country by the encouragement of railways. This was the first entry in the Votes. He had then looked with an anxious hope to see that this Bill had been brought in by his noble Friend the First Lord of the Treasury. Greatly was he disappointed to find that the Bill was in other hands, and those hands not official, though not less active. He found, from what he had read in those unofficial records to which their Lordships were in the habit of referring, that the noble Lord who had already been alluded to (Lord George Bentinck) had exhibited a degree of zeal, intelligence, and industry, which he thought entitled him to the gratitude not only of Ireland but of the United Empire. He wished that this measure had been in the hands of his noble Friend on his left. He wished that they had had the credit of this addition to the useful, but notwithstanding, as he thought, the small and imperfect measures which they had already brought forward. He was in hopes that this great crowning measure would have been in other hands than those in which it was placed, because sure he was that a measure of such importance to the community could never be usefully carried through Parliament but through the medium of the Executive Government. He trusted that there would be no improper—as he should consider it on this occasion—interposition of the prerogative to prevent the progress of this measure. He trusted, and indeed he felt perfect confidence, that in the hands of his noble Friends, who represented that historical party in the State whose efforts had always been directed rather to curb than to pamper and flatter the prerogative, the country would be safe against any such attempt being made. He had come down to the House with a firm determination to express his sentiments on this subject; and considering the relation in which he stood towards most, if not all, of those who composed Her Majesty's Administration, he had felt it his duty to communicate to the head of the Government what he intended to do, because he could not conceal from himself that as his noble Friends had not been the authors of this measure, it might not perhaps be entirely agreeable to them that he should express his satisfaction at a measure which had not proceeded from Her Majesty's Government. But let the measure come from whom it might, he would give it, when it came to that House, his undivided and strenuous support. Not that he thought this the most advantageous Bill that might have been propounded. Not but that he thought that the machinery which it contemplated ought not to be in the hands of private individuals and companies, who might look more to their own interests than to those Irish and national interests which he had so much at heart. He thought that the direction of the system ought to be in the hands of the Government. He had an original and rooted opinion that the whole of our railway system should be in their hands. He hoped, therefore, that his noble Friends would take this measure into their own keeping, In their hands it ought to be, and he hoped that in their hands it would be brought to perfection. He was sure that it would work more for the benefit of Ireland, and if for the benefit of Ireland, for the benefit of the United Kingdom, than any other measure which could be presented for their Lordships' consideration. With regard to the other measures relating to Ireland which had been brought forward by the Government, unless there were something with which to follow them up, he thought that they would fail in their object; and he would tell their Lordships why he thought so. These measures contemplated the improvement of Ireland through the medium of the landlords of Ireland. He was not going to express any opinion either for or against the landlords of Ireland; but he thought that measures which contemplated the improvement of Ireland through the instrumentality of one class of persons, and that class of persons one on whom something like a penal poor law was to be imposed, were not likely to lead to results which their Lordships would like to anticipate. He thought, that in connexion with railways, a system of emigration, if not carried on, ought at least to be largely assisted by the Government. He thought, also, that persons employed on railways by the Government ought to have an opportunity of emigrating themselves; and he considered that gradual emigration ought to go on from the whole surface of Ireland. He did not, however, wish to see any symptoms of clearing estates; on the contrary, if a landlord came to him, and he found that his object was to clear one, or two, or three townlands, he would refuse any assistance towards emigration. He had no doubt that a good system of emigration, connected with this measure of railway employment, would make Ireland capable of bearing a large portion of the burdens of this country; and upon this ground it was that he formed his opinion, that, instead of carrying this measure into effect through the medium of private companies, it should be taken in hand by the Government itself. These were his opinions; and he should not have acted fairly by the House—he should not have acted fairly by his noble Friends, or by those who had introduced the measure in the other House of Parliament, if he had refrained from expressing his sentiments upon that occasion.

The MARQUESS of LANSDOWNE had not originally entertained an intention of expressing any opinion upon the topics to which his noble Friend who had just sat down had adverted; because his noble and learned Friend (Lord Brougham) did not mean, nor, he was sure, did he desire, that his Motion should lead to any discussion on the very important question with which that Motion was collaterally connected. To that Motion he (the Marquess of Lansdowne) saw no objection; and the noble

Lord opposite (Lord Stanley) saw no objection to it; and till his noble Friend (Earl Fitzwilliam) spoke, he had no intention of saying anything on the subject. But after what had fallen from his noble Friend, with regard to that prerogative of the Crown of which he said he deprecated the exercise, he must say, that the prerogative in question was one of the most constitutional prerogatives vested in the Crown; one which it would be injudicious and unwise to abandon in any instance; and one of which he was confident that his noble Friend would not wish to deprive the Crown when a necessity arose for its exercise. Now, there was no occasion, perhaps, more necessary for the exercise of that prerogative, than when a large expenditure of the public money was in contemplation, and when that expenditure was inevitably and necessarily connected with a wide field of speculation. It was in the proportion that, in the opinion of the advisers of the Crown, such a speculation might be useful to the country, or lead to mischievous effects, it became the duty of Her Majesty's Ministers to make use of that prerogative upon their own responsibility. That was not the time or the place to state whether that prerogative would be exercised or not. This, however, he might say, that it must be evident to his noble Friend, and to the House, that this prerogative had not been needlessly or hastily interposed to prevent discussion on the subject. He could state from authority, that it was the anxious wish of his noble Friend in the other House of Parliament to make no use of that prerogative which could interfere with the full discussion of the measure. The noble Lord who had been referred to (Lord G. Bentinck), was entitled to bring the measure forward; and he (the Marquess of Lansdowne) thought that it was for the public interest that he should be heard. To what length the discussion upon the mearure might extend, would depend upon the opinion entertained by Her Majesty's advisers upon its beneficial or mischievous tendency.

The EARL of WINCHILSEA entirely agreed in the sentiments which had been expressed by the noble Duke (the Duke of Richmond) below him. No man more deeply felt for the situation of Ireland than he did, or felt more anxious in every way to co-operate with Her Majesty's Government in carrying measures which might bring about the permanent improvement of that country. The measures which they had already introduced were, in his opinion, of a temporary character, and would not meet the difficulties which had embarrassed that country for centuries. Whatever tended to the employment of labour there, could not fail to lead to the wealth and prosperity of the other parts of the empire. The Legislature, however, must now, at whatever cost, endeavour to relieve immediately the suffering population. An extensive scheme of colonization he had long advocated as a means of removing the surplus population of Ireland, and enabling them to go to parts of the world where their labour could be turned to better account. He gave full credit to the Government for the measures which they brought in, with a view to giving relief to Ireland; but he thought that further measures were necessary; for although he was aware that many persons were of opinion that the present population of that country was not too large for the resources in the way of employment which the land afforded, yet he did not concur in that opinion; and, therefore, he thought, that measures ought to be taken for effecting colonization, and giving permanent employment to the people. He was quite sure, that if the Government rejected the proposition of the noble Lord in the other House of Parliament, they would have to bring in some comprehensive measure for the relief of Ireland.

Motion agreed to.

Returns ordered.

EDUCATION.

The MARQUESS of LANSDOWNE: My Lords, in moving the Order of the Day, I beg to ask your Lordships' attention for a short time previously to laying upon the Table a copy of the Minutes on Education lately adopted by Her Majesty's Privy Council. I might lay upon the Table those Minutes without making any prefatory observation, inasmuch as no extensive and comprehensive measure is to be founded upon them; but I consider it more respectful to your Lordships, as soon as possible after the adoption of those Minutes by the Privy Council, and as early as possible after the commencement of the Session of Parliament, to put this House, and the public through this House, in possession of the views which Government entertains upon the subject of education, and what it is proposed to do with regard to it. My Lords, in stating these views to your Lordships, I confess it would have been a source of the greatest pleasure and satisfaction to me were I enabled on this occasion to state to your Lordships that Her Majesty's Government are prepared to bring forward a plan of general and public education in this country of so large and comprehensive a nature as would at once, or by quick strides, place the population of this country in such a condition, with respect to education, as that in which the population of some parts of Europe are already placed, namely, a condition in which an uneducated child is almost a solitary exception to the general state of things, and where, it may be strictly said, that amongst the great mass of the people education is universally extended. My Lords, I am bound in the outset to state that, upon the fullest consideration, it did not appear to Her Majesty's Government practicable and advisable to at once carry into effect a measure for the extension of education upon so large and comprehensive a plan. Undoubtedly it might be attempted; but if the attempt were made, it would be met with serious if not overwhelming difficulties. We could not attempt a measure on such an extensive scale without having it strictly comprehensive, so as to include in the same schools, under the sanction of the Government, children of all religious denominations; and I must say, that the longer I have had occasion to observe the bearings of the whole question, the more I became convinced of the difficulties of attempting such a general and extended and comprehensive plan of education. The difficulties which present themselves in opposition to the introduction of such an extensive measure, are very important, and I may add that they are not new. Indeed, that they are not so, I may show by appealing to the judgment and experience of my noble and learned Friend on the opposite bench (Lord Brougham), who has for so long a time been anxious to spread education in this country; who has stood so honourably, and consistently, and perseveringly forward in the cause of education; and, notwithstanding all the energy, all the ability, all the authority and influence of the noble Lord, he failed in bringing the question to which they were applied in this case to a satisfactory conclusion. He failed in doing this—others have failed; and although it may be said in reply, that what individuals have attempted in vain, might succeed in the hands of a Government, yet that observation ought not to be made without reflecting that in this country any interference on the part of the Government with the ordinary habits and arrangements of the people, is calculated of itself to excite suspicion and jealousy with respect to those who undertake such an interference, thus creating at the outset a difficulty which it is scarcely possible for a Government constituted as ours is effectually to overcome. Such a wide and comprehensive plan as that to which I have alluded, is likely to be met by two classes of objectors: the first and most powerful class of objectors, those who, from motives the most virtuous and pious—motives which must be respected—dread even the contact at schools of young persons of different religious persuasions. However I may respect the pious feelings which lead to that objection, I will say that it is carrying such an objection further than I would carry it, being, as I am, full of confidence in the soundness and truth of the doctrines of that religion which I profess. However, many persons entertain that objection, to such a degree that they cannot be brought to consent to any system which would combine under the same roof and under the same system of instruction, individuals of different creeds and sects; and they form the first class of objectors to whom I have adverted. There is, my Lords, another class of objectors in this country from whom difficulties would be experienced by those who might attempt such an extensive system of education — it consists of persons not without power, and influence, and authority in this country — namely, persons who object to any interference at all with education on the part of the Government, and who consider that the same principle ought to be applied to education which they would apply to other subjects, namely, the voluntary principle and the voluntary system; and who also think that any interference of the Government on a large scale, would have the effect of damping and diminishing the efforts which individuals were now making in the cause of education, not indeed to a sufficient extent, but which they think would ultimately be made to an extent commensurate with the necessities of the case; and thus, to a certain extent, would injure the success which might otherwise follow the attempts of those individuals. When I state that these are the two principal classes of objectors, I am far from stating that they represent the universal opinion of this country; for though I am confident that no person in this country deserving of the name of statesman, or deserving of any authority, can have ever contemplated the establishment of a system of education on a basis which would not admit of religious instruction, or who would suppose it safe or expedient that the mass of the people should be invited to enter into the great field of general knowledge, and yet that they should be allowed to travel there without the light of religion—

> . . . "Sola sub nocte per umbram
> Perque domos Ditis vacuas et inania regna;"

yet there are many religious and learned persons in this country who think it would be practicable to unite under the same roof, and in the same school, for the purposes of education, persons of different systems of religion, if the same system of secular instruction were common to all, and without at the same time providing the same religious instruction. There are also many persons in this country who, although they are jealous in general of direct interference on the part of the Government, and are apt to view it with suspicion and distrust, yet have proclaimed themselves willing to adopt this system, believing that it is amongst the paramount duties of a Government to provide for the younger members amongst all its subjects the blessings of education. Those are some of the principal objections which might be anticipated; but those who make these objections are themselves classes; and you will agree that it would be impossible at this moment to introduce a system of general education under the authority of the law, without meeting with those difficulties, those apprehensions, those jealousies and mistrusts of interference, which would materially affect the progress of the system, and introduce dissension with relation to a subject which, of all others, requires harmonious and willing co-operation of all descriptions and classes of society, in order to carry it out—which would tend to perpetuate dissensions, impair the efficacy of the plan, and prevent a peaceful and amicable action where it was most desirable that such should exist. For these reasons, I, and those with whom I have the honour to act, as well as the Goverment which has preceded us, have come to the conclusion that it is not expedient to introduce any extensive and comprehensive measure on the subject of general education at present; but, nevertheless, it appeared evident to us that it is perfectly practicable, and without any great interference with the resources of the country, to give, under various heads, to the extension and improvement of education in this country, an impetus beyond what it has hitherto received; and that provisions might be made, going beyond that restricted application of the means given by the public which confined them to the erection of schools and some other objects, which would so extend the efforts of those individuals who were concerned in the establishment and patronage of those schools, as well as those of the schoolmasters employed, as to be greatly beneficial, on the whole, to the general object which they have in view. I will now proceed to show to your Lordships, what it has been thought possible to effect with this view; and, in the first place, it is desirable that I should state what has been the operation of the system as it is, as regards the number of the schools, and of the children who are benefited by the education provided in them. It appears, then, that the Parliamentary grants made for the purposes of education, from the year 1833 to the year 1846, amount altogether to 490,000*l*. The school-houses which have been erected, will, when all are completed for which grants have been made, provide accommodation for 550,000 scholars. In addition to these, there are about 3,500 schools which have invited inspection, and which give accommodation for 150,000 scholars. And here I may call attention to the fact, that so many schools, which have not been assisted by the Government, or received money from the public funds, have, nevertheless, applied for inspection, as a strong proof of the confidence entertained in the system; for I am desirous, at all times when I address your Lordships, to impress on you the extreme importance of inspection. I hold it to be a consideration of great importance, and I look upon it with peculiar gratification, that besides the schools which receive Government assistance, and in which Government inspection is indispensable, a large proportion of schools which did not require the aid of the Government, have, nevertheless, petitioned the Council over which I have the honour to preside, for the benefit of inspection and advice. Including the number of scholars provided for in the schools assisted by the Government, then, and the 150,000 who are provided for in schools established by private funds, but which have applied to be subjected to inspection, it would appear that there is at present provision for about 700,000 scholars. But I should be deceiving your

Lordships if I allowed you to suppose that that number are really provided for; as, on a fair calculation, perhaps, 200,000 may be deducted, and still allow a provision for half a million of scholars. Besides these schools of a general character, there are also a great number of normal schools, all of which have received assistance. There are the schools connected with the Church of England in the dioceses of Chester, York, Salisbury, Ripon, and Durham; the British and Foreign normal schools; and the normal schools connected with the Church of Scotland—all of which receive assistance. I now come to a subject to which, I beg to say, I do not attach a particular importance, but on which I am about to ask your Lordships' approbation of steps which I believe you will admit are on a sound principle, and in the right direction, and which, as far as they will operate at all, will be likely to operate beneficially. In the first place, it is proposed to carry out further the system of inspection; that is to say, that the schools shall be more frequently inspected than they now are. I confess that my own opinion is, that the establishment for inspection should be sufficiently extensive to insure, with the industry and diligence of the inspectors, an inspection of every school once in each year. I cannot, however, say that even with the assistance of three or four more inspectors, that is an object likely to be accomplished. Hereafter it is possible we may be able to accomplish it; but at present the addition which we propose to the existing number of inspectors, is such as to insure an inspection of the most important schools, and an approach towards that most desirable object, a general inspection annually. The next subject which I have to bring before your Lordships' notice, is one to which I attach the greatest importance. Those of your Lordships who have read the reports of the Inspectors of Schools—many of which are written with the greatest ability, and all with the greatest attention to the duties of the station of the writers, must have found that one universal feeling existed among those who are placed in a situation which renders them competent to judge of the difficulties of the task of carrying out the system generally, to the effect that not only did the greatest difficulty arise from the want of schoolmasters, but also from a deficiency of assistant schoolmasters. You will find it stated that great difficulty has been experienced in finding persons properly qualified to support the master in discharging the duties of his important office. To meet this inadequacy, it is proposed, that in the case of all schools of which the reports shall be good, a power should be granted to the master of each school to take apprentices, who shall be allotted to such schools, after having been selected from among the best scholars, and trained with a view to their being ultimately made schoolmasters themselves. It is further proposed, the masters having been reported qualified to receive such apprentices, that an allowance shall be made for each apprentice so permitted to be taken, and who shall have been recommended by the guardians, the patrons, or the committees directing such schools. I apprehend that this is a provision which will not only afford to the apprentice the means of learning his future duties, but would also operate as a reward to the schoolmaster, whose acknowledged zeal and good conduct in his station entitled him to be selected as the instructor of such apprentices; so that, in proportion as the schoolmaster is reported to be qualified to give such instruction, and the pupil to receive it, each will derive an advantage under this arrangement. Beyond this, it is further proposed that, from the apprentices so to be trained, to add to the general stock of schoolmasters, of those who conducted themselves well, and who had usefully aided in carrying on the discipline of the schools during the time of their apprenticeship, a certain number shall be selected to be exhibitioners to the normal schools, so that they will make this a second step in their progress towards the station of schoolmaster from the moment they are so selected, whether under the denomination of Queen's scholar, or whatever other name they may receive. But, at the same time, as it is probable that out of the whole number who will have been prepared, or intended to be so, for the office of schoolmaster, there may be some who may not be considered finally peculiarly eligible for that office, and yet will have received benefit to a certain extent from their education, it is proposed to make an arrangement (in which I have the satisfaction to state my noble Friend at the head of the Treasury, and my right hon. Friend the Chancellor of the Exchequer fully concur) by which those young persons not being chosen as schoolmasters, shall receive employment in the great revenue departments. It is considered that by this arrangement a double fund of encouragement will be provided for these young men, and that while an increase in the number of qualified schoolmasters will be insured, those who may not be deemed peculiarly fitted for the office will not lose the benefit of their education. It is also proposed that there shall be a periodical examination by the inspectors, which, it is hoped, will have the double effect of securing the selection of those best qualified for the office of schoolmaster, while, at the same time, it cannot fail to have the effect of exciting general attention even among those who could not be directly interested in the result of such examinations. Attaching, as I do, great importance to these proposals, I now come to another subject which is also referred to in the Minutes of the Privy Council, and which I consider also calculated to produce an effect on the general cause of education: I allude to the condition of the schoolmaster himself. There is no class of men in this country who, from all I have read or seen, or that has been reported on the best authority, of their exertion on the one hand, and their condition in society in the other, are better entitled to the attention and favour of Parliament than they, the great mass of the schoolmasters of England, are. There is no class of society who are less likely to receive, in a worldly sense, the reward of their merits and exertions. They are a class of persons, many of them most meritorious, and who are mainly instrumental in advancing the fortunes and future interests of those who are committed to their charge, and whom they often afterwards see advancing to prosperity, and even attaining to wealth, while they themselves are chained down to their laborious duties, hopeless and without requital, trusting, no doubt, to their own conscience and virtue for the faithful discharge of their duties, but in many instances dispirited by the hopeless state of their old age, their hearts chilled by want, and their hopes checked by penury. They are men who are placed in immediate contact with, and performing some of their duties in common with, the clergy; but at the same time, while they take their full share in the performance of those duties, they receive a most inadequate amount of reward. I do think that any extension of the system of education in this country will be imperfect which does not, to a considerable extent, ameliorate the condition of this class, and excite their hopes of reward. It is therefore proposed that a provision, small, undoubtedly, at first, but still which will be considered a very great object as a provision, however small, for old age, shall be made for well-conducted schoolmasters and schoolmistresses who shall be reported as having, for fifteen years, conducted unexceptionably schools of a certain size. Besides these retiring pensions, if I may so call them, it is proposed that a certain number of gratuities shall, on the report of the inspectors, be given to schoolmasters who have not retired, but who shall have been declared to have exercised their vocation creditably to themselves. This, no doubt, will prove a very useful stimulus. There is another provision, but of a different nature, which I think your Lordships will agree should be made when applied for. It has often made the subject of application to the Privy Council that the schools should be provided with a species of industrial apparatus, including that which is necessary for the cultivation of the soil, by means of which instruction might be conveyed to the scholar on subjects not usually included in any system of education. These plans the Government propose to follow out in the same spirit in which they have been commenced, but only to make the proposed advances where the local aid bears a due proportion to the Government grants; but at the same time to make advances freely to those schools which maintain a system of industry in connexion with their school system. In towns, it will necessarily be the most convenient course to supply the schools with industrial apparatus, and to hire workshops for their use; in agricultural districts, to hire fields for the exercise of industry and the cultivation of skill during the leisure hours of the pupils. This will be not only a great, and important, and a beneficial stimulus to great numbers of the children themselves, but a great benefit to the country at large. Such arrangements will not in the least degree interfere with the literary avocations of the children; and in my opinion there is nothing which would more reconcile parents to any system of education than that the children should, during their condition of pupilage, acquire the knowledge of some useful trade, by means of which they might subsequently obtain the means of being serviceable to their families. The effect of such a system would be, to remove the disposition which frequently prevails, of withdrawing children from school at too early an age, on the ground that their acquisitions there are of no substantial value. Nothing would so reconcile parents to the continuance of their children for a sufficient length of time at school, as the belief that they were not, all the time they spent there, engaged in the pursuit of unprofitable learning, or rather what their parents consider to be unprofitable learning. Prejudices of this kind do unhappily influence parents at the present day; but I hope the time is not distant when a very material improvement will take place in their mode of thinking. At present there can be no doubt of the fact—as I find from the reports of the inspectors—that those schools are most successful where the parents are made practically to understand that their children, while at school, are for a considerable and useful portion of their time engaged in acquiring knowledge immediately profitable, and of skill which they can speedily turn to pecuniary advantage. The direct utility of the knowledge acquired forms its chief recommendation to parents in general. In favour of these views I may call your attention to testimony which I consider to be of the highest order. It is contained in a pamphlet recently published by the Rev. Mr. Dawes, of King's Sombourn, in Hampshire. He relates in a most gratifying manner the conquest which he has obtained over the prejudices and feelings of his neighbours in a parish which had been remarkable for crime; and such was now the improved state of its morals, and striking exemption from crime, that many even of the higher portion of the middle class sought to have their children mingled with those of the lower in the business of education. Even some of the farmers of the surrounding neighbourhood sent their children to board in the immediate vicinity of the school, in order that they might enjoy those benefits of education which that school diffuses; the whole secret of its attractiveness being, that the children there are taught matters, in addition to the routine of school education, which their parents fully comprehend, and the value of which those parents are fully capable of appreciating. At that school, the children, out of their little savings, are permitted to purchase the books which have been used in the school; and in the fourth year of its existence there were as many as 158 children who so made purchases; the amount which they so applied being 15*l.* These 15*l.* worth of books the children were enabled to bring home to their own firesides, and preserve, to the great promotion of their own comfort, and to the great satisfaction of their parents. Those books were not only a great resource to the children at home, but the possession of them had the effect of rendering their parents sensible of the utility of the system of education which is pursued at the school. Mr. Dawes connected the education of the child with the pursuits of the parent; and thus, while he benefited the one, he secured the goodwill and co-operation of the other; and while the children are instructed in general learning and religious principle, they are also carefully instructed in that particular knowledge which enables them when they return home to render assistance in the pursuits in which their parents are engaged. Upon the utility of those industrial schools I presume that it is now unnecessary for me further to enlarge; and, having said so much, I feel that I have nearly concluded all that it will be necessary for me to address to your Lordships. I have gone through a statement of nearly all the various Minutes which have been laid upon the Table of your Lordships' House. There are, however, some special Votes of the House of Commons respecting schools in workhouses, to which I shall now proceed to call the attention of the House. Those schools are in workhouses institutions of the utmost importance; and it is desirable that there should be inspectors for aiding in carrying out the large and liberal plan of education which Parliament had last year sanctioned. This plan, into the details of which I need not further enter, will, I trust, place the workhouse system on such a footing as to render them models of perfection, instead of being, as I fear they now are in many instances, models of everything defective. Means will be taken in future to supply all these educational institutions with cheap books. The complaint has long been universal, that they cannot get books sufficiently cheap; therefore, no time should be lost in placing at the disposal of masters, for the use of these schools, a sufficient supply of elementary works. I have now, I believe, stated all that is necessary, though I believe—indeed, I fully feel—that everything which Government can at present do must fall infinitely short of that which ought to be included in a general plan for improving the state and education of the people; far short of what ought to be done for the great mass of our fellow-countrymen, whose scenes of unceasing toil place them far away from those elements of thought and means of intellectual culture upon which so much of their morality and their happiness depends. It falls so far short of what it ought to be, that I should almost despair of ultimate success, if from experience and observation I had not seen the zeal upon the subject of education which pervades all denominations of men in this country—if I had not witnessed the unceasing zeal of the clergy in that branch of their duties—if it had not come within my knowledge that scarcely a week elapses without applications and representations reaching my hands which show the steady and gradual mode in which the cause of education is advancing in every part of the country; while that most useful and respectable class of men, the schoolmasters, are improving their own condition, at the same time that they are advancing the best interests of their pupils. These circumstances united cannot fail, I hope, to result in effects most beneficial to the country, whilst they may, at some future day, lay the foundation of something more complete and more practically useful.

The noble Marquess then laid upon the Table of the House the Minutes of the Committee of Council on Education, in August and December, 1846.

LORD BROUGHAM said, that nothing could be fairer than the statement which the House had just heard from the noble Marquess, who very justly and most properly disdained the paltry affectation of saying, that what he had stated to the House was anything like a plan of the Government. It was no plan; and the noble Marquess frankly stated that the Government had no plan, and as frankly gave his reasons why they could have no plan. That which the House had heard was merely a statement of the manner in which they intended to dispose of such grants as Parliament might make; therefore, the House was now merely engaged in conversation respecting that which really constituted a great grievance, the very imperfect substitute for a measure promised and expected, but withheld. It was a grievous calamity, that now, in the year 1847, being just forty-six years since the attention of the public was first directed to the subject of education, and above one and thirty years after Parliament took up the question, by the appointment of a Committee to inquire into that subject, we appeared to be almost as far off as ever from having any national general and comprehensive system of education established in this country. That was no fault of the noble Marquess; it was no fault of the present Government; it was not the fault of the late Ministry; it arose from the peculiar state of society in this country. He lamented, with the noble Marquess, that such a state of things should exist; and so long as its pernicious influence remained in full operation it must baffle all attempts to secure a beneficial system of education for the people. Far be it from him to say that education ought to be rendered compulsory. He had been asked, why not compel the people, as in Prussia, to accept the benefits of education? To that he begged to reply, that the people of England could not be compelled to accept that or anything else. Prussia was governed with military strictness; it was a country subject to rigorous discipline. The people of England could never be got to understand the Prussian system, which trained and drilled the whole community. If a man brought to Prussia a recipe written by Dr. Holland, or any of his learned brethren, no Prussian apothecary could prepare it; neither would they sell the drugs necessary for preparing it; they dared not; if they did, they would be sent to prison. In a case, the particulars of which he had heard, a patient holding a prescription from an English physician was obliged to order post-horses to go to the frontier and get his medicine compounded; he had no other means of saving his life. Such was Prussia. Would the English endure such a system? They could not. The greater the efforts made to force an Englishman to do something that he did not like, even if good for him, the more violent would be his resistance. To make education compulsory would be to make it hateful to the people of England; they even hated what was good when it was forced upon them. But there might be interference without force. This was a perfectly distinct question from that of free trade. He would not interfere with the supply of food, clothing, or furniture, for men would take good care to supply themselves with those necessaries of life; but it was not so as to knowledge: the ignorance of men prevented their knowing the value of knowledge; and thus the more they stood in need of education, the less they wished and would try to have it. If the Government provided cheap schools, the people would, by degrees, be induced to send their children to them. One of the great uses of privately supported schools was, that they had the effect of inducing the neighbours of those who supported them to send their children to such schools, or to some schools. The Government, it was true, might establish some schools at their own sole expense; but to do so to any useful extent would cost great sums, and the Government had not great sums at their disposal —they had not much money to give, and it would be costly to make the experiment. It therefore appeared to him of the utmost importance that the Committee of the Privy Council should not interfere except in aid of local establishments. If they did give help, it ought to be in such a way as to stimulate private beneficence. They should give half, or a third, according to circumstances. It was only in the year 1833 that the recommendations of the Committee of the House of Commons which sat in 1818 were attempted to be carried into effect. Over the inquiries of that Committee he had the honour to preside, and of the Government of 1833 he was a member; but the principle recommended by the Committee in 1818 was never adopted till Lord Grey came into office. The Government, as he had already said, ought to give assistance in proportion to local contributions; this was the resolution reported by the Committee. They might, for example, give outfits; but if they went the whole length of defraying all expenses, their attempts would not succeed. The resolutions of the Committee were the foundation of the measures adopted in 1833 by himself and his colleagues, and of the whole proceedings since that period down to the present time. Again, he could not help lamenting that the importance of education was not more generally acknowledged—that the principle had not struck its roots deeper, as well among the people at large as among thinking persons. The Christian pastor felt that education was the best aid to religion, and the greatest assistance to morals. Judges, Home Secretaries, justices of the peace, felt that the punishment of crimes had little effect in deterring those who were under the influence of temptation. Mr. Bentham and Sir Samuel Romilly, with both of whom he had discussed the subject, contended that if punishments were rendered certain, they would have the effect of preventing crime. If the thief felt assured that in eight and forty hours he must restore stolen property, he would cease to steal. But punishment never was certain; in the present state of society it could not be made certain; nor in any state of society could it be made absolutely certain. Men who committed crimes did not calculate—their minds were not in a frame to reason; if they looked forward to consequences they would not offend; lust was inflamed, and a rape was committed—jealousy was excited, and murder ensued—a bankrupt was guilty of forgery, and, if he did not intend to run away, he confidently reckoned upon being able to take up his Bill before it became due. Now that frame of mind precluded reasoning, prevented calculation, and incapacitated men from thinking rationally and calmly; and, therefore, the motives they applied to the law by the example of punishment were thrown away, because in such a state of mind the criminal regarded every thing, as the French called it, of a rosy hue. If the crime were a forgery, they expected money to meet the bill before it arrived at maturity; if it were any other crime, they expected that it would never be discovered; or, when discovered, that they would never be prosecuted; or, if they were prosecuted, they reckoned on the technical defects of the law, or upon the skill and ability of an eminent counsel; and, if that assisted them not, then they reckoned on the humanity of the judge to spare them; and if that failed them, they reckoned on a defect in the judgment and on a writ of error to revoke it; and, last of all, they reckoned upon making interest to get a pardon; and such sanguine views at the moment of wrong-doing got rid of all the terrors of punishment. Not that he said punishment was of no effect; it certainly was of some, but very little, compared with what it was thought and generally supposed to produce. His own judicial experience, and still more his experience as a Minister, had brought him to this conclusion, and he had found his noble colleague (Lord Melbourne) arrived at the same result from presiding over the police for some years. The operation of punishment was small in deterring from crime. Now, what was to be recommended in place of it? Why prevention of another kind: mending the character—improving the habits of the class among whom criminals were found. Train up a person in such habits that he never would think of committing those offences. None of their Lordships—hardly any one of the other House of Parliament—belonged to that class: he should say almost none in either

House belonged to that class from among whom criminals were taken. They were not persons in their Lordships' rank in society, or in the rank of Members of the other House, with few exceptions. They did not raise a breed of criminals. If they had 1,500,000 persons in London, 200,000 or 150,000 of those persons were the miserable class from among whom came criminals; but not from the upper or the middle classes, or the more respectable portion of the artisans, or even from the more respectable of the day labourers; it was a very inferior class from amongst whom came all criminals. Now, if they could find the means of training the infants of that class—he did not mean the boys and girls, but the infants from three years of age to six or seven—to those honest and amiable habits which they acquired, and universally acquired, and without any exception acquired, at the common infant schools, they would eradicate, in ninty-nine cases out of a hundred, the seeds of crime, and make it all but impossible that those individuals should afterwards be guilty; because they were brought up with tender and kindly affections, with a horror of everything obscene and cruel, sordid and base—they were placed from the earliest age in the state of mind precisely the same with that which made it utterly impossible that persons in their Lordships' rank should ever go out on the highway, or commit any of those deeds to which he had referred. Those who had had any experience in schools knew full well that after children had reached seven, or eight, or nine years of age, their evil habits were deeply rooted, and it was almost impossible to extirpate them. It was by infant training that those great and blessed effects were to be produced, if at all. Now, if they established infant schools for all infants of a tender age, among the bad portion of a population of 1,500,000 in the metropolis, depend upon it they would do a vast deal more to extirpate crime, than with all their criminal courts, and all their executions, and all their transport ships, and imprisonments, and penitentiaries. That was his deliberate and firm opinion as a practical man. He did not give into any extravagant theories on penal law; he did not conform his opinions to the popular views and prevailing feelings on that or on any legislative question. He differed from many persons in his ideas of punishment; but above all he differed from those who said that there never should be capital punishment for any offence. It had been the punishment for forgery: but he had been one of those in the other House, perhaps the person, who had obtained that most excellent change in the law with respect to that offence. He said so to show he was not wedded to his opinion in favour of capital punishment where it was inapplicable. But he was not for giving up capital punishment, and the terror it inflicted, because it operated powerfully to deter men who looked forward with indifference to the lesser punishment, when stripped of its salutary and restraining effects. Thus he utterly denied that Scripture confined it to murder by denouncing it against murder. He utterly denied that its being irrevocable if erroneously inflicted, was a reason for never inflicting it. Every punishment was in a sense irrevocable—who can restore to a convict the fourteen years of his time spent in Botany Bay, or the six months passed on the treadmill? It was only a reason for being careful how you inflict it. These were his reasons for wishing for a public national and general system of universal education, beginning with infant schools, and ending with training schools, which he highly approved of when they were practicable in this country. But why could not such a system be adopted? He could tell their Lordships frankly, very frankly: it was because they had two classes of the community, for both of which he had the most profound and inviolable respect—he meant the members of the Church, and members of dissenting congregations, each in their sphere great promoters of education, and deeply interested in the training of youth. He was not speaking of the clergy, but of the community, although the clergy were most zealously bent on the promotion of education; and he should be most ungrateful if he did not acknowledge that in all his little efforts on this subject, they had been his most valuable and strenuous supporters, both when he was in the other House as well as in that House of Parliament. He never could forget that to every one of the 14,000 circulars which he had issued to the clergy during a dissolution, and so without compulsory authority, he received an answer—to their great labour, and his great advantage. Both Church and sects loved education much; but there was one thing which both the Church and the Dissenters loved more, and that was controversy, which made them neglect the great object of education, and made them prefer more than everything else—victory; they lost sight of the main object in the glory of the victory: that was what he universally found. The Church would have education; but they would rather have a triumph over the sects. The Dissenters would have education; but they far rather would triumph over the Church. In the contest for victory, they forgot the object in view. In their eagerness to outstrip each other, they did not care how far they fell short of the goal. They lost sight of the game in the heat of the chace. The Church would have no system which was so comprehensive as not to allow of any clerical interference; the Dissenters would not have any system which allowed the least interference on the part of the Church; and, therefore, unhappily, between the two, education went more or less to the wall. Now, he was quite prepared to support a comprehensive plan of education which gave some superintendence to the Church—and why? First, because there must be some superintendence, and the Church was established; secondly, because it was the Church of the majority; thirdly, because it was one, and the sects were many, and so it was possible, and any other impracticable. It was impossible to have such a system of supervision as would suit all Dissenters, so numerous were they; and his belief was, that it would be better to give the Church a proper superintendence, and leave the Dissenters to take it or not, as they pleased—the rational part of them would very soon come to like it. Although it seemed that they were not to have a general national system of education—the gain of which he thought inestimable—yet he was glad they were to have something approaching to it. He approved of that part of the system of the noble Marquess which related to inspectors; but he would suggest that the inspectors ought to be instructed never to let it be known beforehand what particular schools they intended to visit. He would have the inspectors, as it were, sporadic, to move about a little more unexpectedly. He would also say, let them get their money in the first instance, and then plant in York, Lancaster, Exeter, Maidstone, or perhaps Lincoln, or somewhere in the east, training schools at which masters should be trained at the public expense. That would not require any exercise of private beneficence; and then let persons who were desirous of establishing schools in different parts of the country, send up teachers to be trained at those schools, as he himself knew, from the correspondence he had had, many were most anxious to do. By those means they would have the advantage of sending forth, every year 500 or 600 persons well trained for teaching. At present the ignorance of teachers in schools was only to be believed by those who had had personal experience and observation of it. There was another suggestion he wished to make, that they should endeavour as much as possible to encourage the taking of quarter pence from the scholars. It was the greatest possible benefit; it saved the independence of the parents, and next to that it saved the money and cost to the country, and, above all, it made the recipients value the education the more because they paid for it. He approved, also, of the plan of giving pensions to the best of those who were trained at the training schools by making them gaugers.

The Marquess of LANSDOWNE said, he had alluded in that respect to those apprentices who had other merits, but were not fit for schoolmasters.

Lord BROUGHAM: Then his fear was that the schoolmasters would not desire to be successful, because they would prefer such a situation. But he entirely approved of a system of retiring pensions, but disapproved of the rule by which they were to be entitled after fifteen years' service.

The Marquess of LANSDOWNE: They were not to be entitled to the pension merely by fifteen years' service, but before they became entitled to it it was requisite they should have served for that period.

Lord BROUGHAM: That was the same period as with the judges; but then the reason was this, that the judges were fifty years of age before they were raised to the bench. He therefore thought that in this case the period of fifteen years was too short a time for them to serve for the purpose of procuring a pension. It was highly important that a better kind of education should be attained. In the French schools reading, writing, and cyphering were not considered enough. He had examined many of their schools, and he found that to those branches of education they added that of drawing; it was of the greatest use in after life; and, above all, it had the effect of leading to accurate habits of observation, and more to a distinct knowledge and mechanical facility than almost any other kind of manipulation. It was a sovereign remedy for correcting idle habits, and of the greatest benefit to the scholar; it was indeed a most admirable adjunct to education. He hoped, above all, that infant schools would not be kept out of view, and more especially because no controversial question could interfere with them. He had only risen to express his hope that the liberality, indeed the justice, of Parliament, would have been extended further, and to express his deep regret that it was necessary to abandon that plan of a national and universal system of education, which he had hoped to have heard proposed by the noble Marquess, though he admitted that the blame of abandonment did not properly fall on the Government, but upon the controversy in which the question was involved.

The BISHOP of LONDON would trespass only a short time on their Lordships, to say but a few words on a subject which had provoked no difference of opinion; but he could hardly suffer the opportunity to pass without making one or two observations, and expressing the satisfaction with which he had heard the clear and candid statement of the noble Marquess of the views of the Government with respect to this question. He thought the course pursued by the Government was exceedingly wise and prudent, as it involved no unnecessary interference with the present system of education, while at the same time they proposed to take advantage of the existing system, and of the facilities it afforded to expand and improve it. The important features of the plan appeared to be an enlargement of the system of inspection, and the encouragement of those most important educational institutions, training schools. With regard to inspection, he was intimately convinced that no system of education, however wisely contrived, would answer its intended end, unless placed under effective inspection, and kept in a proper course of operation by a system of vigilant and regular superintendence, not the superintendence of idle curiosity, nor of suspicion, nor of unnecessary interference, but of judicious friends and well-wishers, whose only object was, that the means of education should not be diverted from the ends they were intended to answer, nor be wasted or flung away. When first the system of inspection was established, he had impressed on the clergy the great benefit and advantage they might derive by calling in the aid of the Government inspectors, in the way both of encouragement and direction; and he was convinced that the prejudice which for some time prevailed among many supporters of the Church schools on the subject of inspection, was gradually giving way, if, indeed, it had not already entirely disappeared. And he felt bound in justice to say, as far as his own inquiry and observation had extended, that the Government inspectors of our national schools had discharged their duty, not only with courage and fidelity, but most judiciously, most zealously, and most unobjectionably. The testimony borne by the clergy and local managers of schools was uniform as to the good effect produced by their efforts; and as long as they persevered in the same line of conduct, as there was every reason to believe they would, so long would the clergy be anxious to welcome them in their periodical visits, and to avail themselves of their influence in keeping their masters and committees in a right direction; for the clergy would derive from the inspectors that weight and authority for their own suggestions, which could not be derived from any other source. With regard to the normal or training schools, their Lordships must be perfectly well aware that one of the chief difficulties to be contended with in the promotion of national education, was the want of effective men to work our schools. Whatever system they might adopt; under whatever name they might exist; whatever machinery they might employ—their utility must mainly, after all, depend on the character of the masters: such as the schoolmaster was, such would the school be; and there could be no doubt that institutions, to which theoretical objections might exist, would nevertheless be of more real benefit with good teachers, than others more perfect in theory which did not possess this advantage. He was satisfied, therefore, that the Government had acted most wisely in determining to promote and extend training schools. This he thought they proposed to do in a well-considered manner, and that they could not fail to do well whilst they trained up an improved class of schoolmasters. It would be a great advantage of the plan now proposed, that it would at once supply a succession of candidates for instruction in the training schools, and furnish a considerable part of the means required for carrying on those schools. He could not dismiss the subject of training schools without suggesting to the noble and learned Lord who had spoken with so much knowledge and so much feeling on the question, the expediency of paying a visit to some of their best normal schools, where he would have the satisfaction of finding that all the suggestions which he had just thrown out to the Government had been for some time past carried into effect, and were now in full operation. He would find, for instance, linear drawing, the importance of which, as a branch of education, he appreciated equally with the noble and learned Lord, taught not only in the normal schools, but also in some of the best national schools. His noble and learned Friend had suggested the establishment of normal schools in most parts of the kingdom; but he would find that they had them already in nearly every part. He would find them in Chester, in York, in Durham, in Salisbury, and in Exeter, as well as in the neighbourhood of London; so that, in fact, the great want to which his noble and learned Friend had pointed, was already partly supplied, and no doubt would speedily be more effectually supplied, and in the least objectionable manner. His noble and learned Friend had also advised that quarterly payments should be required for the education of the children; but, in point of fact, there was scarcely a national school in which these payments were not made weekly—a more convenient as well as a more sure mode of obtaining the object in view; indeed, in some places, a very considerable portion of the expense of these establishments was actually provided for by these means. His noble and learned Friend seemed hardly aware of the extent to which the system was carried out; and it would do his heart good to visit the Church training schools, and to judge, from personal observation, of what was already accomplished. He would venture to say that the students from the training school at Chelsea, St. Mark's College, as it was called, would pass an examination which would reflect credit even upon those literary and philosophical schools—to say nothing of the question of religion—which existed in that seat of learning with which the noble and learned Lord was most familiar, and which had been termed the Modern Athens. With regard to geometry and drawing, they were very accurately taught, and the doctrines of the Established Church were inculcated, not he hoped with any admixture of bigotry, but with a just estimate of their value as being derived from Scripture, and as being most important, as subjects of accurate knowledge, to the teachers of schools, beyond all other men except the clergy, to be inculcated by them upon the children entrusted to their care. There was one point in the speech of the noble Marquess, in its concluding part, on which he (the Bishop of London) wished to reserve his opinion till he had heard more of the proposal: he alluded to the workhouse schools. In dealing with that part of the subject, their Lordships must not forget that it was intimately connected with the subject of national schools; and that indirectly, though more seriously than could be at first conceived, the national schools would be operated upon by the workhouse schools. It had fallen to his lot to visit some workhouse schools, and one in his own parish; and he would venture to say there could not exist more happy or contented children, or any more sensibly amused. He could not but contrast the state of those children, carefully tended, kindly treated, and religiously brought up, with the state in which the same children would have been if they had remained under their parents' roofs. The workhouse schools might be of great advantage to the country if they were properly worked; but they would require a very careful system of management: if they were not well managed, they might discourage the national schools. With respect to infant schools, his noble Friend knew, that, for many years he had interested himself with reference to them; and that he had been instrumental in establishing some of the first of the Church infant schools. Nothing that could bear the title of "controversial" had been introduced into those schools, and he had ever looked upon the infant schools as the training seminaries for the national schools. Like his noble and learned Friend, he was deeply sensible, that if they were to produce a permanent effect on the understandings and the morals of the children of the poor, they must begin at the earliest possible age, at the very dawn of reason, because where the facilities were great of procuring remunerative employment for children, as they were in large towns, they could not expect the children to stay at the schools beyond the age of eleven or twelve years; and they must begin by saving at one end what they lost at the other. He had thought it right to express—and he spoke only individually—his thanks to the Government for the plan as far as he understood it, and to the noble Marquess for having made so clear and candid a statement.

Lord BROUGHAM had been aware of the existence of the district schools, but he had not known that linear drawing had been introduced into the national schools in this country.

The Bishop of ST. ASAPH only wished to make one observation on the plan which met everybody's approbation. He thought he saw one slight objection; the tendency of the plan appeared to him to be that it would draw all the schoolmasters and schoolmistresses from the lowest order of society. He had no objection to raising a certain portion from that class; but he believed it would be a great evil to this country if all the schoolmasters were taken from the lower orders; and the plan would inevitably tend to that unfavourable result. If they took the present schoolmasters and schoolmistresses, they would find that they came from the rank in life of the little shopkeepers and the small farmers. He had lately asked at the national school for the training of masters, and he found that out of twenty persons under tuition only two were of the lower classes. This was the way in which the country had been supplied, and he wished to preserve some who were a little above the rank of the lower classes. The Government ought to encourage schoolmasters a little above that class, and for this purpose they ought to begin by reforming and improving the establishments called grammar-schools.

The Marquess of LANSDOWNE: They are under the control of the Court of Chancery.

The Bishop of ST. ASAPH: The Court of Chancery had machinery that could not touch these little matters, and he thought that by reforming and improving the grammar-schools of this country they would secure a good class of schoolmasters, better than by any other means.

The Earl of WINCHILSEA thought that a system of general education, connected with the Established Church, would meet with general approbation in this country, and he was prepared to contend that a large part of the worthy Dissenters would not object to such a plan; but national education ought not to be taken out of the hands of the clergy, on whom this most important duty rightly devolved. He was convinced, if they were to have an Established Church, that the clergy ought to devote themselves to the education of the great body of the people, and so save the expense of instructors. Great efforts had been made of late years to promote religious education; and he could bear testimony to the exertions of the clergy during the last twenty or twenty-five years to meet the religious wants of the great body of the country. It was one of their duties to meet fully the religious and spiritual wants of the people. They had met their temporal wants with an unanimous feeling; and, if England had done her duty, she would not have allowed an immense population to spring up without any means of religious instruction, without places of worship, and without the superintendence of religious pastors; and they ought not to have allowed, in a great country like this, large districts to remain in a state of infidelity and heathenism, which was a moral and a national disgrace to the country.

The Marquess of LANSDOWNE explained that it was not the intention of the Government to confine the selection of schoolmasters to the class of apprentices; but it was merely intended to enlarge the sphere of choice.

The Archbishop of CANTERBURY said, that his sentiments with respect to the measure had been so fully and so well expressed by the right rev. Prelates who had addressed their Lordships, that it was unnecessary for him to add anything, except to offer his thanks to the noble Marquess the President of the Council, for the great attention he had paid to the subject, and the evident care with which the materials on which the propositions had been founded had been prepared by Her Majesty's Government.

House adjourned.

HOUSE OF COMMONS,

Friday, February 5, 1847.

Minutes.] New Members Sworn.—For Middlesex, Rt. Hon. Lord Robert Grosvenor.—For Chester City, Earl Grosvenor.

Petitions Presented. By Mr. John O'Brien, from Limerick, for the Abolition of Ministers' Money (Ireland).—By Captain Pechell, from Shipowners of Arundel, for carrying into effect the Recommendations of the Select Committee with respect to Lighthouses.—By Mr. Wodehouse, from Norfolk (3 Petitions), for the Repeal of the Malt Tax.—By Mr. Hume, from Distillers in the counties of Forfar and Kincardine, and by Lord John Manners, from Distillers in Scotland, against the Proposed Reduction of Duty on Rum.—By Lord John Manners, from Landed Proprietors, Farmers, and others, against the Use of Sugar in Distilleries.—By Sir Thomas Esmonde, from Wexford, for the Repeal of the Duty on Tea.—By Mr. Ferrand, from Inhabitants of Cropland, for Repeal of the Anatomy Act.—By Mr. John O'Brien, from Limerick, for Alteration of the Bread Law (Ireland).—By Mr. Hume, from John Mackenzie Lindsay, of Dundee, for Inquiry respecting Dundee Harbour.—By Lord John Russell, from Joseph Bentley, Aldine Chambers, London, suggesting a Plan of Education.—By Lord John

Manners, from William Stidolph, of Chelsea, for placing the Education of the Blind under the Superintendence of the Government.—By Mr. Vernon Smith, from Northampton, for Alteration of Law in relation to Extra-Parochial Places.—By Mr. Ferrand, from a great number of places, in Favour of the Ten Hours Factory Bill.—By Mr. Sharman Crawford, from Guardians of the Drogheda Union, for Alteration of Law respecting Landlord and Tenant (Ireland).—By Mr. Vernon Smith, from Northampton, for Alteration of the Lunatic Asylums and Pauper Lunatics Act.—By several Hon. Members, from a great many places, for Repeal or Alteration of the Poor Removal Act.—By Mr. Brotherton, from London, for Abolition of the Punishment of Death.—By Mr. Pattison, from John Williams, suggesting a Plan for the Construction of Sub-Arches (London).

CORN DETAINED AT ANCONA.

Dr. BOWRING rose to put a question on the subject of the detention of corn and maize by order of the Pope. The House was aware that the port of Ancona was one of the great receptacles of the corn of all nations; and, it being a free port, a considerable quantity had been collected in the granaries there. Very considerable purchases had been made at that port for English account, and they were intended to be shipped to this country. It was stated, that an order had emanated from the Pope by which the export of grain was prohibited, that many cargoes had been detained in that place, and that in other cases ships had not been allowed to load. He was desirous to ask, whether the subject had come under the consideration of the noble Lord the Foreign Secretary, and whether he had taken, or was likely to take, any measure in regard to it?

Viscount PALMERSTON had received several representations upon the subject some little time ago, and had on that very day had an interview with a deputation from the city of London, who came to him upon the same matter. In consequence of the former representations he had issued an instruction on the 22nd of January to the British Minister at Florence, to remonstrate with the Roman Government upon the subject. The interdict proceeded, as he believed, not from the Government at Rome, but from the local authorities at Ancona; and, as he was informed, it applied not to corn coming from other parts of the world and deposited at Ancona, but to corn the produce of the Roman States, purchased on English account, some of it already deposited in the free port of Ancona, and some of it on its way. The matter was of very considerable interest and importance, and he could assure the hon. Member that the Government would use their utmost endeavours to persuade the Roman Government to exempt from that order all corn purchased or intended for this country.

BOAT OF THE HIGHFLYER.

Dr. BOWRING had another question to put to the noble Lord. A boat's crew, belonging to the *Highflyer*, was reported to be lately abandoned by that ship on an island near the coast of Abyssinia; it was said that four persons were left there, among whom was a young man in the service of the Peninsular and Oriental Company; their fate was unknown. There was some suspicion that the boat in which they were had been lost; but, on the other hand, there was some reason to believe they had been captured by some of the savage tribes in that neighbourhood, and conducted into the interior of Africa. No doubt the noble Lord had taken all proper steps; but it would be satisfactory to the families of these unfortunate persons, as well as to the public, to be assured by him that such was the fact. He begged to ask what had been done?

Viscount PALMERSTON had had the circumstance brought under his notice some little time ago, by a representation from the father of one of the officers of the ship. He gave orders for an inquiry to be made by our Consul General in Egypt, and had received since that time a report from the India House, with a very circumstantial detail of an inquiry made by order of the political agent at Aden, who sent an expedition to investigate the transaction on the spot. They examined minutely the island where the parties were landed, and several adjacent islands, and they were satisfied that the boat's crew had not been taken prisoners, but that there was every reason to fear that, having started from the island, they had been driven out to sea by a gale of wind, the boat had foundered, and they were lost at sea.

THE PENINSULAR MEDALS.

Sir A. L. HAY asked the Secretary at War whether any steps had been taken to carry into effect Her Majesty's gracious intention of granting medals to the officers engaged in the Peninsular war?

Mr. FOX MAULE replied, that it was quite true that Her Majesty had expressed her gracious commands that a mark of distinction should be conferred upon the officers who served in the Peninsular war; but, in carrying those commands into effect, the details had been found somewhat difficult. He could, however, assure the hon. Member and the House, that no unnecessary time should be lost in conferring upon those gallant officers the reward which Her Majesty had been graciously pleased to bestow.

THE HERRING TRADE.

Sir A. L. **HAY** requested to know whether any correspondence had taken place with the Government of Belgium, Russia, or any other country, relating to their tariff in regard to herrings exported from Great Britain; and, if so, whether it were likely that the differential duties, which in some countries were almost prohibitory on the introduction of herrings from this country, would in any of them be relaxed?

Viscount **PALMERSTON** answered, that several representations had been made to him from Scotland upon this subject, and instructions had been given to our Ministers abroad to endeavour to obtain some modification of the tariffs. Of course, however, each country held itself at full liberty to regulate its tariff for its own interests, either real or supposed.

THE BLACK CAT.

Mr. **MUNTZ** asked the noble Lord under what Act of Parliament the English vessel *Black Cat* had been for several days, and still was, detained in the river Thames, and all explanation refused by the Customs?

Viscount **PALMERSTON** replied, that the *Black Cat* was detained by the Board of Customs, in consequence of an application made by the Portuguese Minister, who represented that she was lading with military stores, intended for purposes of hostility on the coast of Portugal, and therefore equipped and fitted out in contravention of the Foreign Enlistment Act. He did what was his duty in a case of that kind; he made a communication to the Treasury, and suggested that the Treasury and the Board of Customs should take such steps as the legal advisers of those departments thought proper, and the *Black Cat* had in consequence been detained. Whether the detention would be authorized by further investigation, so as to lead to permanent detention, or whether the owners could produce such proof as should satisfy the Customs that there was no ground for detaining the vessel, he was not able to say; he had done all that his duty required, in referring the application of the Portuguese Minister to the proper quarter.

MERCHANT SEAMEN'S FUND.

Mr. **AGLIONBY** inquired whether there were hopes that the evils and hardships at present connected with the administration and collection of the Merchant Seamen's Fund would be remedied?

Mr. **WARD** informed the hon. Member that a commission would be appointed, in the hope that it would lead to the preparation of some measure upon the subject.

NAVAL COURTS MARTIAL.

Mr. W. **WILLIAMS** asked whether the Admiralty intended to effect any improvement in Naval Courts Martial, and the regulations as to punishments on board ship?

Mr. **WARD** could assure the hon. Member that those subjects had been under the most serious consideration of the Admiralty, and no board was ever more anxious to check the abuse of the power of punishment on board a ship. On the Motion of which notice had been given for next week, he hoped it would be in his power to give an explanation upon the subject which would be satisfactory to the hon. Member and to the House.

SUGAR REFINED IN EUROPE.

Mr. **RICARDO**, believing that the question had arisen between the Governments of Holland and this country, begged to ask whether refined sugar was admissible here under our navigation laws as the manufacture of the country where it was refined?

Mr. M. **GIBSON** answered, that according to the navigation laws, manufactured goods were to be deemed the produce of the country of which they were the manufacture, and if sugar refined in Europe were to be deemed a manufactured article, no doubt it would be admissible in this country as European produce. Of course, that question would be decided by the Customs when the sugar should be presented for admission.

NAVAL PAYMASTERS.

Captain **PECHELL** begged to remind the Government of petitions which had been presented last Session, and the Session before, on the part of the paymasters in the Royal Navy. They complained that, a commission having been specially appointed to investigate the matter, they had not received the addition to their pay which that commission recommended. They had abandoned large per centages in expectation that such an addition would be granted; and he now wished to ask what steps had been taken in regard to those petitioners, and whether any satisfactory arrangement had been made?

MR. WARD thought, the best answer he could give the hon. Gentleman was, that it was the intention of the Board of Admiralty to carry out the recommendation which had been given by the Commission of 1841; and an amount sufficient to meet the addition of 1*s.* a day would be included in the Estimates of the present year.

MILLBANK PRISON COMMISSION.

On the Motion that the House, on its rising, adjourn to Monday,

MR. T. DUNCOMBE inquired whether the right hon. Gentleman the Secretary for the Home Department had received any report from the third commissioner for Millbank Prison?

SIR G. GREY had not received any document on the subject.

MR. B. ESCOTT observed, that the right hon. Gentleman knew he might have the report at any time. Last Wednesday, the difference between the right hon. Gentleman and himself turned on the question whether he ought to report to Her Majesty under Her Majesty's commission, or should express his opinion in the form recommended by the right hon. Gentleman, of a letter. That was not a form which he had felt authorized to adopt; but, admitting that the right hon. Gentleman was more likely to be well-informed upon that point than himself, he had thought it proper to take professional advice upon the subject; he had gone to two very eminent members of the bar, who were extremely conversant with matters of the kind. The first expressed a very clear and distinct opinion in favour of the course he had adopted; but as that gentleman did not wish his name mentioned, he had gone to Mr. Sergeant Manning, whose opinion was, that not only was the course he had adopted a proper one, but that it was the only proper one; and that had he adopted any other course, he would have been acting in opposition to the Queen's commands. Under these circumstances he did not see what he could do but persevere in sending in his report. Mr. Sergeant Manning had mentioned two cases in which commissioners had disagreed from the majority of their respective commissioners. These were the Common Law Commission and the Bankruptcy Commission; and in each case the commissioner who did not agree with the others sent in a distinct report under his hand and seal.

MR. T. DUNCOMBE remarked, that in consequence of a punctiliousness on the part of the right hon. Gentleman and the construction put by the hon. Gentleman on the terms of his commission, the House was unable to get the document. The one would not receive a report; the other would not write a letter. The question ought to be settled one way or another, and therefore he begged to move, as an Amendment on the Motion of adjournment—

> "That an humble Address be presented to Her Majesty, that She will be graciously pleased to give directions that there be laid before this House, a Copy of the Report made by Bickham Escott, esq., one of the Commissioners for inquiry into the state of Millbank prison."

SIR G. GREY was quite ashamed that he should be called upon on the Motion now made to answer that no such document was in his possession. He had to apologize to the House for repeating what he had stated the other day, that it was the uniform and constant practice in regard to commissions of this kind for a commissioner who did not concur in the report of his colleagues to send a letter stating the grounds of difference. He had expected certainly that the hon. Gentleman would have put him in a position to place his opinion *verbatim et literatim* before the House. But at present all he (Sir G. Grey) could say was, that he had no document in his possession in regard to Millbank prison which had not already been laid upon the Table of the House.

MR. HUME observed, that there was no objection to give information. But what did it signify whether it came as a report or as a letter?

MR. T. DUNCOMBE understood that the right hon. Gentleman (Sir G. Grey) was now in possession of the document.

SIR G. GREY stated, that he was then in possession of a paper which had been put into his hands in a very unusual mode by the hon. Member for Winchester; but being there not as Secretary for the Home Department, but as a Member of the House, he had only to say, that he had not been able to read one word of it.

MR. ESCOTT disclaimed any intention of doing anything discourteous. He had taken the opportunity to remove the technical difficulty which had been alleged, the right hon. Gentleman having declined to produce the document, on the ground that it was not in his possession. A great deal too much had been made of this matter.

Amendment withdrawn. Motion of adjournment agreed to.

DESTITUTE PERSONS (IRELAND).

On the Order of the Day for bringing up the Report on the Resolution to make provision out of the Consolidated Fund for the Temporary Relief of Destitute Persons in Ireland,

VISCOUNT CLEMENTS suggested the adoption of measures for rendering dormant charities effective. Such a course was especially advisable at a time when so great demands were made on the Government. He should be glad to know whether anything had been done in reference to the Reproductive Loan Fund. Some provisions in the new measures of Government would do more injury than the system of public works. There were 2,050 electoral divisions in Ireland. Double the number of boilers for soup would be required on the lowest calculation; and a staff would be needed not only for the purpose of giving out soup, but of persons competent to keep accounts. All these matters would fall to be arranged by a central committee; and the scheme would be found so utterly impracticable, that he must beg Her Majesty's Government to reconsider the nature of the Bill. He felt that, at least as regarded the western part of Ireland, it would be found utterly impossible to obtain a staff requisite for carrying on these kitchens in any satisfactory manner. What he would suggest was, that the operations should be carried on through the means of the assistant commissioners, who had some experience in the working of the poor law, rather than the parties indicated in the Bill. There was also a material point, which seemed to have escaped the attention of Her Majesty's Government. It would be necessary, in pursuance of this measure, to form new districts throughout the whole of Ireland. According to the third clause of the Bill, it was proposed that the Lord Lieutenant should

> —"give orders for the constitution of a relief committee in any one or more electoral divisions of a union formed for the relief of the destitute poor in Ireland in which it shall appear to him that this Act should be put in force."

Now, the very first thing that would require to be done would be to decide upon those districts. This would require persons of considerable experience, local information, and sound judgment; and he did not see any machinery in this Bill sufficient to enable the Lord Lieutenant to come to a just decision. He had objected last night to any one connected with the constabulary in Ireland being a member of the proposed board. The other members named were objectionable on another ground, that they could have little time to bestow upon it. He confessed that, *pro formâ*, Colonel Jones, the head of the Board of Works, might properly enough be chosen a member of the board; but he did not see how it was possible, with the mass of business which Mr. Redington, Colonel M'Gregor, and Colonel Jones had on their hands, that, however willing they might be, and willing he was sure they were, they could spare time to carry out so important an arrangement. He hoped, that in going into Committee the Government would not consider themselves bound to admit anything else but what was already in the Bill; but that they would have recourse to some other machinery, so as to make the scheme work if possible.

The CHANCELLOR OF THE EXCHEQUER thought it would be infinitely better to postpone discussion on these matters till they got into Committee. He rose merely to answer a question which his noble Friend had put to him. If his noble Friend had referred to the correspondence which had been published on the subject, he would have seen that 5,000*l*. of the money in the hands of the Irish Reproductive Loan Fund had been voted for the encouragement of the fisheries on the western coast of Ireland, to be expended under the direction of the Board of Works.

Report received.

MR. WILLIAMS wished to know from the Chancellor of the Exchequer whether it was his intention, with respect to all the moneys which were to be advanced for carrying out the objects of this Bill, to take the votes specifically, as he was doing in the present instance?

The CHANCELLOR OF THE EXCHEQUER replied in the affirmative.

Resolution agreed to; and instruction accordingly given to the Committee on the Destitute Persons (Ireland) Bill.

On the Question that the House go into Committee on the same Bill,

MR. HUTT said: Before the House shall proceed further with the Bill for relieving destitution in Ireland, I am desirous of saying a few words on a subject which, although referred to the other evening by the Government in a tone of disparagement, I conceive to have a very important relation to the question before us. It is a subject which has for many years engaged my attention, and in connexion with which I once held a public employment under a commission from the Crown. I allude to the subject of colonization. I am led to notice it the rather because of the appeal made to me in this House on Monday last, by my hon. Friend the Member for the county of Limerick (Mr. Smith O'Brien). Several years ago my hon. Friend and I were engaged in a laborious attempt to ascertain the value of the colonial dependencies of the British Crown as seats for the location of the suffering population of the United Kingdom. Since that time my hon. Friend has been involved in pursuits in Ireland, with which, as he knows, I feel little sympathy; but it was a source of real gratification to me to observe him in the hour of his country's distress turning, for practical relief, to those measures of colonization which, at an early period of our lives, associated us in a common study. In all that my hon. Friend has said and written on the subject, in reference to the present state of Ireland, I heartily concur; and I am the more anxious to co-operate with him now, because I know that, in recommending colonization to his countrymen, he is following anything but the vulgar path of popularity in Ireland. I rejoice at it. Of my hon. Friend, at all events, it will not be remarked, however lamentably true of other Irish proprietors, that when multitudes of his perishing countrymen were looking to him for counsel and assistance, he thought he had discharged every duty towards them by voting inflammatory resolutions at public meetings, or by making clamorous demands on the Imperial Government for impossible relief. I concur, too, with my hon. Friend in regretting that the noble Lord at the head of affairs, when pointing out the means of Irish relief, should have spoken of colonization in terms of only qualified approval. To me, Sir, it appears indisputable, that systematic colonization is not only one of the best means to which we can have recourse for mitigating the destiny impending over Ireland, but I believe it is the only means by which the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland can escape the calamities attendant on the sudden transition of the whole Irish people from potato to corn as the staple article of their food. Do not suppose that it is only the famine of 1847 with which you have to contend—that it is the pressure of instant want alone which you are required to relieve. It is a something far more formidable; it is a great moral revolution; it is a fearful dispensation, not only unexampled in the history of the world, but one which, I believe, was never before contemplated in the speculations of man—the sudden and compulsory transfer of pauperised millions from a cheap to a dear system of diet, without any alteration of their wages. I am not raising the question whether it be more desirable for a nation to subsist upon potatoes, or upon corn: no one doubts about that. I am asking you how you will provide for the people of Ireland while they are in the state of inevitable transition? That is what I want the Government, and the House, and the country to consider. The noble Lord at the head of affairs, in the course of his masterly speech the other evening, referred for important facts connected with Ireland to the commissioners appointed some years since to inquire into the condition of the labouring classes of that country. No higher authority could be appealed to. A report, sanctioned by such men as the Archbishop of Dublin, Dr. Whateley, the Catholic archbishop, Dr. Murray, and Mr. Anthony Blake, must always carry with it the weight of unquestionable authority. It is of a peculiar value now, if for no other reason than this—that it enables us to estimate the magnitude of those difficulties with which the noble Lord and the Government have to grapple, and which I am sure we all hope they may be enabled to overcome. Now what says the report? That in 1831 there were in Ireland 1,131,000 agricultural labourers, and half that number of labourers non-agriculturists—the heads of families—who existed on the verge of starvation, at wages varying from 2*s.* to 2*s.* 6*d.* a week, by means of a potato diet. Well! the potato diet is at an end. It is impossible to read the papers on the Table of the House relating to Irish destitution without seeing that the potato crop, to which the population of Ireland have so long looked for their almost only food, will never again be resorted to for that purpose. Upon what then must they now rely; to what must they resort for their subsistence? They will go naturally to the lowest, the cheapest description of grain. But they cannot resort to grain of any kind, not even to meal of Indian corn, without a considerable augmentation of their wages. They must be swept from the face of the earth, unless, with a corn diet, they can obtain 6*s*. or 7*s*. a week. But what does that fact mean? It means that it is impossible for the present population of Ireland to exist, unless something like 15,000,000*l*. can thenceforward be added annually to the fund from which they derive their wages. From what source is this sudden and prodigious demand to be supplied? From Irish estates? I know that there is an opinion prevalent both in this House and throughout Great Britain, that the property of Ireland ought to support the poverty of Ireland. But look for a moment to the report of Archbishop Whateley. He tells you that, in 1831, the whole rental of Ireland was less than 10,000,000*l*. sterling; (even the assessment recently made under the Poor-law Act showed it to be less than 13,000,000*l*.;) that is, less than would be sufficient to provide the labouring population with the lowest and coarsest description of cereal produce. What must they do in such an extremity? Must they draw upon that fund in aid of their wages which goes to the annual replacement of capital expended in cultivation? I need scarcely remark that, if they do so, they will necessarily diminish agricultural production in Ireland, and enormously increase the difficulties of meeting their present destitution. Let us hear no more, then, of the doctrine, that the property of Ireland most support the poverty of that country. It is a wild and a mischievous delusion; seeing that the whole rental derived from the soil of Ireland would be insufficient, in the sudden disappearance of the potato plant, to supply the people with the cheapest description of food. Perhaps the emergency at which we have arrived may be yet more strikingly represented. The whole annual production of Ireland—all that is distributed in wages, rent, profit, and replacement of seed, &c., is estimated by Archbishop Whateley's commission at 36,000,000*l*. Now let us suppose that you abandon the whole of the annual production of the country to the people (who are taken at 2,000,000 of families)—that you give it all; you would not by that means provide each family with more than 7*s*. a week; but the inevitable consequences of such a wild partition would be to convert the whole island into a universal charnel house. The truth is, that the destruction of the potato plant in Ireland has made it impossible for that country, in the actual state of its agriculture—utterly impossible—to feed its actual population. Say what you please, devise what you may, unaccompanied by improvements for creating a larger production of food, the poor law, giving a right to out-door relief, which, in some shape, you are going to pass, and to which my hon. Friend the Member for Stroud (Mr. Poulett Scrope) seems to turn with so much hope and expectation, never can be carried into practical effect. And for this simple and manifest reason, that the gross revenue derived from the land in Ireland would be inadequate to the rate necessary for the maintenance of the aged, infirm, and destitute population. The great, the all-absorbing consideration is, then, how to increase the quantity of food attainable from the soil of Ireland. The report, to which I have so often referred, will of itself suggest by what means this work can be achieved. It is stated in the report, that Great Britain, with 34,000,000 of acres of cultivated land, obtains an annual production which is estimated by the commissioners at 150,000,000*l*.; that Ireland, with 14,600,000 of acres, produces an annual return estimated at 36,000,000*l*.; or, to state the comparison more simply, the production per acre in Great Britain is four times as great as it is in Ireland. What is the cause of so startling a difference? The climate of Ireland is not less favourable, the soil of Ireland is not less fertile than that of Great Britain; with an equal system of cultivation equal results might be ensured. The question, therefore, is, how to introduce into Ireland that mode of cultivation—that beneficial combination of capital and labour which prevails in this country? To any such introduction—there is no doubt of it—the present subdivision of land-holdings in Ireland presents insurmountable obstacles. It appears by one of the volumes connected with Irish distress laid on the Table of the House, that the greater portion of the whole area of Ireland is cut up, not into small properties, as in France and the Rhenish provinces of Germany, but into small holdings varying from two or three roods to ten acres in extent. Now what style of farming can be carried on when land is let out in these miserable shreds and patches? What kind of stock can be kept? What sort of drainage can be executed? What rotation of crops can be observed under such a system of agriculture as we have here? With the present subdivision of land among occupiers, it is impossible that any combination of labour and capital can be applied to cultivation. But industry performs her miracles only when many hands are employed at the same time on the same work. The British farmer, with more or less of capital, cultivates his farm by means of combined and therefore effectual labour. The Irish peasant, almost destitute of capital, makes the most of his miserable holding by means of his isolated and unassisted exertions. The consequences are before you. It requires four labourers in Ireland to raise the same amount of produce as is raised in England by one. My argument may therefore be thus summed up. The present population of Ireland cannot be maintained by the soil of Ireland, without a large increase of its production. Increase of its production is unattainable without improvement in the system of Irish cultivation; and no such improvement can be looked for without a consolidation of the holdings into farms of a moderate extent. What is to become of the crowd of tenants who must necessarily be dispossessed by the formation of farms of—I do not say 500 or 1,000 acres as in England, but of—fifty or sixty acres each? How can we provide for them; or rather, how can we place them in circumstances to provide for themselves during the season of transition? The noble Lord has referred to two modes: home colonization, by the redemption of waste lands in Ireland; and foreign colonization, by settlement in the ultramarine possessions of the British Crown. Home colonization would afford them present employment in the work of reclamation, and afterwards as labourers on the recovered lands when divided into farms. Foreign colonization would also open out new fields for their industry, with this additional and important advantage, that it would, at the same time, diminish the demand for food at home. Home colonization must be very gradual in its progress. The reclamation of waste lands could not, until after the lapse of a considerable time, alter the relation between the quantity of food in the country, and the people to be fed. It may be doubted, indeed, whether, until the vicious system of parcelling out small patches of land to occupying peasants shall have been eradicated in Ireland, the reclamation of waste lands will have any tendency to remove the inherent evils of Irish society; whether the new lands, under whatever restrictions they may be disposed of by the Crown, will not quickly become as crowded with cottiers as the old lands now are; and whether the only change which we shall effect by the proposed outlay of British treasure will not be a wider extension of the same barbarous modes of cultivation, and of the same wretched condition of the people—the creation, in fact, of a larger Ireland. Foreign colonization, however, might be undertaken on a scale sufficient to effect a sensible alteration in the proportion between the demand and supply of food, even during the present year. Nor is this all. We at the same time plant the colony and prepare the way for progressively increasing immigration to its shores. The demand for labourers at this moment is intense in the colony of South Australia. Five thousand men could probably at this moment find employment, at high wages, in the mining operations of that colony alone. There are, moreover, in that flourishing province, nearly half a million of fertile and lightly timbered acres already surveyed, marked out, and mapped, and in a state for immediate occupation. A considerable body of labourers would find a welcome reception in New South Wales: and I have no doubt whatever, that under the wise and energetic administration of the noble Earl at the head of the Colonial Office, the same prospects will soon be developed in the magnificent islands of New Zealand. On the eastern shores of South Africa there are millions of acres of the finest soil in the world, wanting nothing but industry and capital to support a large and prosperous community. I know not what amount of labourers might be comfortably located and provided for in Canada, under arrangements which might be instituted between the Colonial Office and that valuable portion of the British dominions; but of this I am quite certain, that the British dominions comprise, at home and abroad, unoccupied land sufficient to support generations yet to come, of the constantly increasing population of the United Kingdom. I come now to the question of cost. We are proposing to expend 10,000,000*l.* this year on temporary expedients of relief, or at best on undertakings which have but a remote tendency either to secure the permanent amelioration of Ireland, or to prevent the recurrence of the present distress hereafter. The future is dark and threatening. The present palliatives deepen its forebodings. Much of the expenditure in Ireland on the part of the Imperial Government, however necessary by reason of the utter destitution of the peasantry, has a demoralizing effect on their minds. It teaches them the dangerous lesson, to lean for support on anything but their own prudence and exertions, and to prefer abject fawning on the pity of others, to manly self-reliance and honourable independence. Moreover, the sacrifice by which this is accomplished is prodigiously great. It is surely a strong recommendation of the measures I am advocating—home and foreign colonization—that they might be undertaken without any eventual cost at all to the Imperial Treasury; that if engaged in with prudence and guided by experience, we have the certain assurance that they may be made to defray, within a brief period, the whole amount of their outlay. We know that the reclamation of waste land in Ireland, if judiciously conducted, would remunerate the undertaker: this is an inference drawn from a comparison of the charges of reclamation, and the market value of land of similar quality. But when I say that foreign colonization would reproduce the whole of its cost, I state it not as an inference merely; it is the result of operations of which I have had practical experience. I was a member of the commission which planted the experimental colony of South Australia. I shall always remember with deep gratifition, that, in co-operation with one of the most valuable philosophical writers of our age and country—I mean Colonel Torrens—and generally in subordination to his superior intelligence, I assisted at the foundation of that important and remarkable colony. I entreat the attention of the House to these facts. We sent out a population of 15,000 persons to South Australia—at that time a wilderness not only uninhabited, but positively unexplored. The presence of the population gave to the wilderness such a value, that we were enabled to sell 225,000 acres of Crown land for a sum which exceeded by 85,000 the whole cost of the emigration. Startling as this statement may be, it is not all. We raised on the security of the future revenue of the colony, a further sum of 85,000*l.* for the purposes of the outfit and government of the colony. The loan was effected wholly independent of the Government, but it was afterwards assumed by the Treasury, on conditions of its ultimate repayment out of the colonial revenues. That condition is now being fulfilled. By a recent order of the Treasury, the interest of the loan is no longer borne by the Consolidated Fund; it is paid out of the growing surplus of the revenue of South Australia. And thus you have the spectacle—one perfectly unexampled in the history of the world—of a colonial dependency which has not only defrayed all the cost of conveying its population from across the globe, but which is actually replacing all the charges of its original outfit and early government. Now, such has been the result of a first experiment in an untried field of improvement, amid all the embarrassments, the difficulties, and the errors which are incidental to such undertakings. It would be comparatively easy now to plant another South Australia—to lay open, without cost to the Parent State, in one of its distant dependencies, a new and a happier country for those whom the inscrutable dispensations of Providence have visited with suffering and privation here. Are we not to have recourse to this expedient? I wish to guard myself against misapprehension. I am not stating that any plan of home or foreign colonization, however judiciously devised and executed, could give very extensive immediate relief to Ireland. My allegation is this: that unless timely measures are adopted by the State to carry out systematic colonization on a comprehensive scale, it will be impossible to surmount the difficulties occasioned by the sudden and forced transition of a whole population from a cheap to a comparatively dear description of daily food, all of which will probably be of foreign growth, without the possibility of any corresponding augmentation of their wages. I desire to have it borne in mind, that without withdrawing the cottier occupants you can have no improvement of agriculture in Ireland, and, consequently, no increase of its present inadequate production; that unless production be promptly increased, the population of Ireland must be supported on imported food at the expense of this country; and that just, humane, and generous as the people of this country unquestionably are, they possess neither the will nor the power to pay 10,000,000*l.* for successive years to support Irish destitution. The very proposal to contribute another such amount would, I am persuaded, be fatal to any Government. I trust that the present Government, of the general principles of whose policy I have always been an adherent, while pressing forward those measures of temporary relief which are contemplated in the present Bill, and in others announced by the noble Lord, will seriously consider whether it may not be possible, by adopting a plan of systematic colonization, to rescue property in the United Kingdom from confiscation, and the people of Ireland from the horrors of long-protracted pestilence and famine.

SIR G. GREY was fully sensible of the importance of the subject which his hon. Friend had just brought under their consideration: so important was it that it ought not to be discussed incidentally in the shape in which his hon. Friend had just submitted it. His hon. Friend had fairly stated that his proposal was not applicable to the present urgent distress in Ireland. The Bill now under consideration was a measure which would more effectually meet the existing pressing day-by-day distress which prevailed throughout many parts of Ireland. It must be obvious that it would be advantageous that this Bill should be brought into operation at the earliest possible time; and he hoped, therefore, that it would be allowed to proceed without intermingling with its discussion other important questions.

MR. STAFFORD O'BRIEN hoped that he should be excused for rising to call the attention of the House to a subject which was intimately connected with the present condition of Ireland, namely the propriety of establishing smaller territorial divisions in that country for the purpose of poor-law rating. To effect this object no Act of Parliament was necessary, for the Poor Law Commissioners were invested with the necessary authority under the 18th clause of the Irish Poor Law Act. The tendency of the present system of large territorial divisions was to remove the superintendence of the poor from authorities in the provinces to authorities in the towns. In other words, it favoured the principle of centralization; but there was no country less adapted than Ireland for the application of that principle, which was directly opposed to its social system, and to the character of the people. He thanked the hon. Member for Stroud for the benevolence which he had displayed upon the subject of the poor laws; but when he read in the hon. Member's pamphlet that townlands in Ireland were analogous to parishes in England, he apprehended that no one practically acquainted with the former country, would be inclined to attach much weight to the hon. Member's opinions. Unlike most measures which were brought forward respecting Ireland, his present proposition would excite no religious or political feeling in that country; but he must declare at the outset that his object was to array two classes against each other, and he claimed the attention of the House whilst he attempted to describe those two classes. The House had voted, and it was about to vote, millions for Ireland. Whether it was right or wrong to do so, he would not then stop to inquire; but after the money had been given, the ever-recurring, never-ending question remained to be answered, "What are you to do with the Irish landlords?" Public attention had recently been directed towards the Irish landlords more pointedly than usual. It must be difficult for English Members to decide between the conflicting statements which were made in that House respecting the Irish landlords. On the one hand, they were attacked for their rapacity, cruelty, and oppression; whilst, on the other, were recounted instances of great self-denial, extraordinary exertion, generous philanthropy, and patient perseverance. Still the question recurred, "What are you to do with the Irish landlords?" He should have no difficulty in answering that question, if he were not aware from experience, and from the history of Ireland, that there was no body of men in any country more completely divided into two classes than the Irish landlords. Never were two classes of men more unlike each other in feelings and wishes. One of them still longed for what he must honestly call the unpopular and disgraceful past; the other looked for better days for Ireland, applied themselves benevolently to get at the root of the social evils which afflicted her, with the view of applying a remedy, and shrank from no exertion or self-denial to accomplish that great object. He stood there to call upon the House to draw a distinction between those two classes of men in all their legislation. It would become the House to show that it did not hold in equal favour those who stretched to the utmost the rights of property, and strained within the narrowest limits its duties; and those, on the other hand, who made the possession of property instrumental to promoting the happiness of all around them. The great objection to more minute territorial divisions for the dealings of the State with the poor, would be that urged by the right hon. Gentleman the Secretary for Ireland, in a letter published in the Correspondence with the Board of Works, relative to the relief of the destitute poor. The right hon. Gentleman had received a letter from the Royal Agricultural Society of Ireland, calling for smaller territorial divisions than the electoral districts. That letter was not printed with the correspondence, though the right hon. Gentleman's answer to it appeared there: this he regretted; it was possible to put a sinister interpretation on its absence. It might be said that the letter of the society contained arguments which it was not at all easy to answer. But one of the arguments used against their proposal was, that it would give a stimulus to clearances. But the estates on which emigration had been encouraged for a number of years, and where the population had been kept down, would not be benefited by clearances: very few estates were so cleared now; fewer still would be cleared hereafter; and, if they were, the evil would be far less with the proposed extension of the poor law. There could not, then, be much stress laid upon this argument. It might also be said that the smaller divisions would act as a restraint upon labour. That might be true in England, with its complex law of settlement, but was of little force in Ireland, where, practically, there was no law of settlement at all. Neither as to the encouragement of clearances, the fettering of labour, or entailing greater expense, was there any difficulty that could not be overcome. The right hon. Gentleman further stated, as a reason for preferring the present divisions to smaller ones, that it brought together larger and more variously constituted bodies of proprietors, with good social and moral effects. [MR. LABOUCHERE: That is not my letter.] The statement appeared in a document printed in page 301 of the Correspondence with the Board of Works on the relief of the poor, and dated December 4, 1846; it was official, and if the right hon. Gentleman did not write it himself, he must at least be prepared to support the views it took.

MR. LABOUCHERE explained that the observations which the hon. Gentleman had quoted, formed no part of his letter; that letter was published along with a great many minutes and remarks, and both letter and minutes were included in the papers laid on the Table. The observations were drawn up by a gentleman connected with the Government; they contained a very sensible report on the subject, and without pledging himself to particular expressions, he would certainly avow his general concurrence with it.

MR. STAFFORD O'BRIEN understood, then, that it was a document inserted among the correspondence, but not a letter, as it was written by an unknown hand, and sent nowhere; that it was not a communication to the Board of Works or any public department; and that the book was altogether a peculiarly Irish correspondence, since it omitted all that were letters, and put in all that were not. On those observations, then, he would make no more remarks; but the argument the right hon. Gentleman concurred in was, that the meeting together of the gentlemen of a large district was a desirable thing. If there were no proprietors but those who did attend such meetings, this might be true; but when he had attended the meeting of a committee in any district with which he was acquainted, he found that those who ought to have been foremost lent them no aid, did not lead them, and gave them very little assistance. It had been proposed to levy an absentee tax in Ireland; whatever might be the merits of that tax, at present it would be ill timed. The Government were bringing forward a measure that would be heartily welcome, to facilitate the sale of incumbered estates. They were inviting the English capitalist to invest his money in Irish land, and it would be unwise to tell him before he had done so that he would immediately be taxed as an absentee. They were spreading their nets from the other side of the Irish Channel, and it would be better to let the capitalist invest his money and fall into the trap, before they showed him the uninviting hook that was laid for him; before they told him, that this said Irish Channel should be as Styx to him, over whose waters there was no return. He did not wish the Government to turn land jobber and agent, to make itself the gaoler of Irish landlords, or to dictate what should be drained, or enclosed, or purchased, or sold; but the Legislature ought to draw some distinction between the landlords who did perform their duties and those who neglected them. What had the whole of the present debate turned on? On the differences between Protectionists and Free Traders, or between Whigs and Tories? No; it might be fairly and truly said to have turned upon the question he was now pressing on the attention of the House. He thought it unfair to press heavily on the landlord who had improved his estates, employed labour, and invested capital, for the misdeeds of another who had neglected his duties. Let him, for the purpose of illustration, take England for one townland, and Ireland for another. Ireland was miserable, suffering, destitute, and discontented. Did not English Members say, it was unfair that England should pay for the misdeeds of Ireland? They said, if Ireland was miserable, discontented, and wretched, it was because in past times its landlords had been improvident, neglectful, and unimproving; because they had not availed themselves of their opportunities; because they had not done justice to what was their own. He was not prepared to say these charges were without foundation; he had never, since he had paid any attention to the subject, been able to disguise from himself that the landowners of Ireland had much, very much, to answer for. To a great degree, though not altogether, perhaps, they were liable to the charges brought against them. Whether this were the case or not, taking Ireland and England separately, the whole course of this debate had resolved itself into a great "townland" discussion. England says, as she might justly say, "Let the property of Ireland support the poor of Ireland; England cannot be perpetually burdened with Irish poverty." However willing to meet the present great emergency, yet England must insist on its being no precedent for continual relief; but that for the future the property of Ireland must and shall support its poor. If then they gave up the system of entire centralization, he was fairly entitled to ask them to draw a definitive distinction between implacable enemies and those who necessarily would best aid and co-operate with them. If they were disposed to charge the poor rate on the Consolidated Fund, his argument fell to the ground; when they once admitted the expediency of a territorial division, then let them carry out the true principle, and take care that the property of the townland in Ireland shall be responsible for its poverty. Hon. Gentlemen were eager enough to cry out "Help yourselves;" and the right hon. Baronet, the Member for Tamworth, had, not for the first time, pressed on the attention of Irish landlords the expediency of taking care of their own interests; but something more was apparently to be understood in that advice—that the Irish landlords were bound to help their neighbour also. And when the adoption of that advice really was made compulsory, he called on the Government not to accumulate difficulties, and to separate in Ireland the good from the bad landlord. They must do this, for it was out of their power to strike an average. The Irish people were called a lawless people, and certainly the Irish people did reject the laws which had obtained the sanction of the constitution; but they had, in defence, created a code of their own, and it should now be the duty of the Legislature to win them from their allegiance to their dark and unwritten doctrines, to a system which should be more palpably based in justice, and better tending to their happiness and welfare. How could they better begin than by acting justly and fairly towards those whose interests were intermixed with the interests of the people? He had had opportunities, frequent and sufficient, of comparing the character of the peasants of Ireland with that of the agricultural population of Scotland and England; and the result of his examination convinced him that, peculiarly and especially, the Irish peasant was governed, more than the peasant of any other country, by territorial and ancestral influence. He did not mean the influence of rank; he meant, that when a landed proprietor exercised his power over those below him justly and benevolently, that man possessed more influence than could be given to him or kept from him by any law. And if that were the case, it was incumbent upon the Legislature to strengthen so serviceable an authority. As far as relief was concerned, the more minute territorial divisions were made, the more suitably and easily relief could be administered. The personal influence of landlords was of the greatest value. They all saw in every paper tales of violence, which no one could palliate or defend; but they did not see there the many acts of friendship and gratitude which the recent difficulties had called forth between landlord and tenant. They did not see in the papers how much had been done by the presence of a respected Irish landlord in times of great pressure and distress. He called on the House to strengthen the hands of those men, who, being the friends of the peasantry, were necessarily the friends of that House. He was, however, far from seeing any design or tendency in Government to diminish the area of taxation; he beheld in the Bills before them a very ominous sign of an intention to enlarge it.

If they succeeded in doing so—if they enlarged the present divisions made for the purposes of the poor-law rating, or, in other words, if they substituted unions for electoral divisions—he would abandon the matter in despair. Every one must admit that the Labour-rate Act had been, *pro tanto*, a nullity. The collection of large masses of men in one spot, and their abstraction from agricultural pursuits under that Act, was in itself a great evil; but the landlords had hoped there would be an end to it, and he sincerely regretted that the announcement of the intention of the Government on the townlands question, which had been so anxiously expected by those who had co-operated with the Government in all its difficulties, had not been made. A man might be very willing to pay for improvements on his own estate, but he could not pay for those on the property of his absentee neighbour. Every person acquainted with Ireland must know that this objection was well founded. He feared, however, they were going to resist the principle he advocated, and were prepared to persevere rather in the extension than in the diminution of the area of taxation. But they would not do so unopposed, and without his entering his solemn protest, that as far as the forms of the House would allow him, he would persist in objecting to this—he would not say vicious and dangerous, but to this—fatal principle. If the Government were by such means, applied to the permanent poor law of Ireland, about to discourage benevolence, to weaken responsibility, and to foster selfishness, at least they should not do so without a warning from one who had attentively studied the character of the Irish people. He feared, when he sat down, that he would remember something that he could have wished to state to the House; but he would conclude with observing that, if his experience of Ireland were worth anything, they could not give to the landed proprietary of Ireland a more heavy blow and greater discouragement than would be inflicted on them by enlarging the area of taxation.

MR. LABOUCHERE was very unwilling to detain the House one moment from going into Committee on the Bill; but in consideration of the great importance of the question brought forward, and because otherwise it might have appeared as personal disrespect to the hon. Gentleman, or as insensibility on his own part to the importance of the subject, he felt it his duty to make one or two observations. This was no new question; he had had this townlands question, as the hon. Gentleman called it, urged upon him over and over again while he was in Ireland, by the hon. Gentleman himself and by others, landed proprietors, who entertained a very strong opinion on the point, and whose station in the country demanded from any Member of the Government that they should be listened to with deference and respect. But the more he had considered, the more was he convinced that very important principles were involved in the question now before the House — that it involved one consideration on which it would be impossible for the Government to give way. They had felt all along the great necessity, so far as practicable, of carrying with them the cordial co-operation of the landlords in the efforts they were making to rescue the people of Ireland from the effects of the calamity which had fallen upon the land; but they had, nevertheless, come to the conclusion, that the proposal on this subject was of such a nature, that, in their duty to the Irish people, taken as a whole, they could not comply with it. Now, what was this principle thus pressed upon their attention? He had never heard it stated so plainly, so nakedly, so broadly, and he would add, so honestly, as by the hon. Gentleman that night: it was neither more nor less than that, in providing for the destitution of Ireland, they should deal, not with communities, but with particular properties. That was the question, though it had never before been so nakedly explained. It was in a very different shape; it had been urged by the Agricultural Society when applied in the controversy on the Labour-rate Bill. It was then said—

> "When we ask you to adopt the townland division, the principle of individual properties, we admit it is not fair for the proprietor to say he will take care of his own poor, and will not look over the hedge to see what is being done by his neighbour; we are willing that the assessment should be levied so as to affect all the property in the electoral district for the support of the poor; we are willing to expend that money in providing for the destitute on our own estates, and even beyond the limits of our own estates; but we ask, when we have done this, that we shall be allowed to employ the people on our own estates, and that we shall not then be subject to any further taxation."

He thought there were very great objections to any such arrangement. He would not now repeat all the arguments he had used on the former occasion, because the case was not now entirely before the

House; but it was clear that the hon. Gentleman asked neither more nor less than as had been stated. The hon. Gentleman objected to the electoral districts as the unit of taxation. Now, he would tell the House what an electoral district was. There were 2,050 electoral districts in Ireland, each from 10,000 to 15,000 as an average of acreage. This was not an enormous tract of country; it was a district in which it was reasonable to expect that the proprietors would act together for the public good. But still the hon. Gentleman objected to the system: he wanted the Government to go further—to go down to the townlands; there being 60,000 townlands, and in almost every instance coterminous with private property. The hon. Gentleman wanted them to deal with individual proprietors in their individual capacity; he desired they would not deal with the community. That, however, was a principle in which they could not safely acquiesce; it was dangerous, and it might often prove unjust. The hon. Gentleman asked if they would deprive proprietors in Ireland of all motive to take care of the condition of, and to employ their own people resident on, their own properties, by swamping them with an immense mass of destitution from the surrounding district? His (Mr. Labouchere's) belief was, that in this question a medium must be aimed at, and that the extreme of either principle was decidedly mischievous. He thought it wrong, in making divisions, to make them so large or so extensive as to deprive the proprietors of any district of all motive to interest themselves in the welfare of the surrounding poor. He considered that it was an excellent provision in the poor law which gave encouragement to landowners to employ the poor in their neighbourhood. This he fully admitted; but it was quite another thing to restrict the principle so far as to throw upon each individual proprietor the charge of taking care of the resident poor on his own property, and not to insist upon his combining with persons in his neighbourhood in the responsibility of relieving the destitute of his district. He looked upon that as an inadmissible principle; it was not, so far as he knew, admitted into the poor law of any country in the world; it was not the principle applied to an English proprietor in an English parish. The English proprietor was not permitted to say that if he employed the poor in one form, he was not to employ them in another. They told the English proprietor that he was bound to take care of the poor of the parish in which he lived. They told the different proprietors of a district that they must concert and combine and co-operate in this object; and they forbade him to deal alone in his individual capacity. He believed, without wishing to say it in an invidious sense, that it was a principle not built upon anything applicable to the present day. It applied to a state of serfdom; it was founded on the feudal principle. The noble Lord opposite, the Member for Newark, cheered that sentiment, and he (Mr. Labouchere) knew that the noble Lord liked the proposal of the hon. Gentleman all the better for being based on the feudal principle; but to him it was a great objection that it was a feudal principle, and that it was not at all applicable to the condition of England and Ireland in 1847. He had stated that he had an objection to the principle of the Motion of the hon. Gentleman; but, even if the principle were conceded, he held that it would be found quite impracticable in detail. He believed that if they had subdivisions of 60,000 townlands all over the country, with separate machinery at work, and separate officers to carry out the objects of this Bill—or even if they had only one-half or one-fourth of that number of townlands, it would be utterly impracticable to carry it out. But he would not go into that, as his objection was to the principle of the Motion. He ought to say here, that he thought the proposed measure would operate most unjustly in many cases. Take the case of a great proprietor who had a large property on which there was scarcely any population at all: because such a man undertook to support his own poor—though scarcely a single individual lived on his estate—was he not to be called upon to aid in supporting the poor creatures who lived upon an estate adjoining? Such a thing was perfectly inadmissible, and he believed would not be listened to for a moment in that House. But there were other reasons, peculiar to Ireland, why the proposal of the hon. Member would work most unjustly. He thought every encouragement should be given to improving landlords; he thought the man who improved his property and gave employment to the people was a benefactor to his country, and ought to be encouraged; but there were cases in Ireland where men had improved their estates, but who nevertheless turned off and manifested no concern as to what became of the people who had lived upon those estates. Now, he thought it would be a monstrous injustice if persons who so acted should profit by such a scheme as that of the hon. Gentleman; while those who, on neighbouring estates, from motives of humanity, had allowed their people to remain, should be burdened with the support of those thus left upon their hands. He must also say that the plan of the hon. Gentleman was altogether inapplicable to the case of towns. The minute subdivision of the country which he proposed, would throw an intolerable burden of taxation on many of the towns, and large villages even, in many parts of Ireland. He could assure the hon. Gentleman, that if he had come to this conclusion with regard to his plan, it was not without serious consideration, or without having availed himself of every opportunity, while in Ireland, of communicating with parties most interested in the subject. And he must say that, considering the way in which the population of Ireland was at present constituted—how the people were, in particular places, huddled together—considering the mischievous manner in which the population was, from particular causes, distributed at the present moment, he was convinced that such a course as this — that each townland, or each collection of a few townlands, should support its own people, and not be called upon to contribute to any larger division—would have the effect of exempting many who ought to bear the expense from the burden of maintaining the people; while, on the other hand, a crushing weight of taxation would be thrown upon particular townlands in many parts of the country. [Mr. S. O'Brien was here understood to say that he did not mean to make townlands the principle of division in all cases, but that he considered the electoral divisions too large.] He understood the hon. Gentleman to plead for the principle of townlands—for the principle of dealing, not with communities, but with the property of individuals; and he repeated that he did not think such a principle applicable to Ireland at the present day. He thought the hon. Gentleman very much underrated an advantage derived from managing these matters in local districts—he meant the advantage of co-operation in those districts. He knew that the hon. Gentleman had great experience on this part of the subject. He had exerted himself with most praiseworthy activity in the district in which he lived as a member of the local committee; and he feared that the hon. Gentleman had not met with the support and co-operation which he ought to have done. But in Ireland, generally, there had of late resulted the best effects from the combination of all classes which had taken place for the purpose of giving relief to the people. They had met in the relief committees and in sessions who had never met before. The Protestant and Catholic clergyman, the landlord, the tenant, the cess-payer—men of different creeds and different politics, were forced together by the pressure of circumstances, and learned to act together, to know one another, to understand one another, and to appreciate one another. The system which had been pursued promised to confer the most lasting advantages upon Ireland; and he should therefore regret to see it in any degree stopped, or that any course should be adopted to discourage it. He thought that in asking the people of Ireland to meet in the electoral districts, they were conferring great advantages upon themselves, while they were thus enabled to give their support to Parliament, and to render material assistance to Government, in the great work they had to perform; a work which, they would readily believe him when he said it, required the co-operation of all classes of the community. Now, he thought the principle of the hon. Gentleman would put a stop to all this; and therefore for that, and other reasons, he considered it his duty to oppose it. He had made these observations with reference to the Bill before the House; and he would not be tempted to enter upon the question, whether the system of electoral divisions or the system of unions, as applied to rating, would be best under the poor-law relief measure. That was not the question before them; but, when it did come under their notice, he hoped it would receive from the House a careful and dispassionate consideration. Of course, Her Majesty's Government would approach it with a full sense of its importance, and with an earnest wish to take that course which they considered would be most for the advantage of Ireland. The question before them at present, was not whether they would make the electoral districts smaller or larger; but it was, whether they should desert the principle of dealing with communities, and go down to the principle of dealing with individual properties. To that he was decidedly opposed. He had come to the conclusion that they could not justly or safely accede to the proposal of the hon. Gentleman; and he hoped the House would not give that proposal their sanction.

Mr. M. O'FERRALL expressed a hope that Government would not oppose this proposal when the Poor Relief Bill came to be discussed; and, in that case, he would suggest that the House should waive all discussion of the subject for the present.

Mr. LABOUCHERE would deline giving any pledge on the subject.

Sir H. W. BARRON regretted exceedingly the tone adopted by his right hon. Friend (Mr. Labouchere) on the present occasion. Nine-tenths of the experienced men in that part of Ireland in which he resided, said that the electoral division was much too large, and was exceedingly dangerous to the rights of property; and that it did not stimulate the landlords sufficiently to watch their own interests or the interests of those located on their property. If they extended the poor law in Ireland, and did not at the same time contract the territorial responsibility, they would commit an enormous and incalculable mischief on the landed proprietors in that country. It was quite a mistake of his right hon. Friend below him to say that the principle propounded by the hon. Member for Northamptonshire would require new machinery. What the landed proprietors required at present was, some measure which would have the effect of stimulating them to employ their tenants in the improvement of their property. Let them narrow the responsibility, and bring home to each landlord, in the plain manner pointed out by the hon. Member, the duties which he was required to perform towards his tenantry and the poor around him. They must be told that they would be required to employ their poor in useful works on their own property, or feed them in the poorhouse. Was it not plain that every landlord, no matter how negligent, no matter how ignorant, or how unwilling he might be to employ the people around him, would, as a matter of necessity and self-defence, say, "Why, I would rather, of course, have some labour, some productive work from the men that I am obliged to support, than be compelled to feed them in idleness in the workhouse." He thought, therefore, that the deduction was clear, that the principle suggested by the hon. Member for Northamptonshire would have the effect of stimulating the landlords, as a matter of necessity, to employ the poor in the improvement of their own estates. The great argument, in fact the only tangible argument, that had been brought forward against the principle of the hon. Gentleman, that he could understand, was, that it would have a tendency in stimulating landlords to clear their estates; but he was surprised that it did not strike his right hon. Friend that against such a procedure there would be a complete remedy; and it was this: the landlord would be bound for three or five years (the number of years was of no great interest) to employ or support the parties whom he might have ejected; that was to say, if they should happen to apply to the union workhouse. It would be, of course, left to the board of guardians to decide whether applicants for relief had been ejected from estates in the townlands where they applied for support. That, in his opinion, was a complete answer to the objection raised by the right hon. Gentleman. The right hon. Gentleman had said that the principle proposed was not in accordance with the custom; but he begged to state most distinctly—and it had been already again and again stated, and could not be too often repeated—that the custom which prevailed on this subject in England, had been handed down from one generation to another. And if that custom had been found to work evil, for Heaven's sake let them not inflict the same principle upon Ireland. It had manifestly worked incalculable mischief for England. The Irish landed proprietors believed that it was their duty to support the poor on their own property. The right hon. Gentleman had talked about theories, but what the hon. Member had laid down were practical measures; and as long as he could meet with such measures he would throw theories to the wind. Let them make every landlord accountable for the pauperism which, by his neglect, by his ignorance, his absenteeism, or bad management, he had brought upon his estate. By so doing they would compel every landlord, in self-defence, to take care of his people, and to manage his property to greater advantage than he did at present. That was plain common sense, and he was surprised that theories had been brought forward as objections to the principle laid down by the hon. Member for Northamptonshire. But he begged leave to ask whether the poor in England were supported on the electoral division system? He believed that they were not. He believed that the law in England was, that every parish should support its own poor; and if that were the law, let the same be introduced into Ireland, if the plan of the hon. Member were rejected. Let them not be tormented in Ireland with some newfangled system that might be of incalculable mischief to it. A parish in England was, in ninety-nine cases out of a hundred, only one-fourth the extent of an electoral division in Ireland, and the law in the two kingdoms was, therefore, not analogous. He knew an electoral division in Ireland which extended sixteen miles in one direction, and ten miles in another. Let them make property accountable for the pauperism that was upon it. The Legislature had now a *tabula rasa*, a blank sheet of paper as it were, for their legislation. If they adopted the system now propounded by the Government, he believed in his conscience that it would amount to a confiscation of the property in Ireland. He implored the Government not to persevere in their present measure. He felt strongly upon, and was perfectly acquainted with, the whole of this matter; he had also had the benefit of the experience of some of the most practical landed proprietors in Ireland; and they believed with him, that unless the Legislature narrowed the responsibilities of property, the greatest mischief would be inflicted upon Ireland—that this measure would, in fact, tend to involve the whole of that country in one common ruin.

Mr. BELLEW said, there was no doubt that this measure would have the effect of confiscating some of the landed estates in Ireland, but he thought that such confiscation would be richly deserved. He would ask whether such confiscation would not also be highly serviceable to the country? Believing that the measure was calculated to administer to the wants of the poor of Ireland and the food of that country, in many respects, he would give it his support.

Lord J. MANNERS wished to ask the practical gentlemen of the nineteenth century whether they were prepared to oppose the principles laid down by the hon. Member for Northamptonshire, merely because the right hon. Gentleman (Mr. Labouchere) said that he had a great objection to anything which related to feudalism? Why, did the right hon. Gentleman ask what was the principle of feudalism, of which he had talked in so strange a manner? His idea of feudalism was, that it involved the performance of mutual duties and respect for mutual rights. He might be right or he might be wrong in his view of the principle of feudalism; but the view which the right hon. Gentleman had taken was totally opposed to the principle that property had its duties. Now he might be wrong, but his first conviction was that the community would best be served when individual rights and individual duties were properly maintained and performed. But, as an English Member, he thought that he might be pardoned if he took a part in the discussion of this question, because the right hon. Gentleman laid down this principle that the duties of the community were to be regarded in the first instance; and in laying down such a principle, he thought that the right hon. Gentleman had opened the door which might at no distant period lead him to march on for the increase of the area of local taxation in England. If the right hon. Gentleman meant anything, he meant that the areas for local taxation in England were at present too small; and when he saw that this was an undecided question, he thought that English Gentlemen might be pardoned if they criticised a little the important position taken by the right hon. Gentleman the Chief Secretary for Ireland. He thought that they ought to look very carefully into this matter, and he as an English Member would be prepared, whenever this Bill came to be discussed in Committee, to pay the utmost attention to the practical statements of the hon. Member for Kildare, the hon. Member for Waterford, and those other hon. Members who would not, he trusted, be led away, or suffer the House of Commons to be led away, by the expression of opinions upon feudalism or anything else which had really nothing to do with the question at issue.

Mr. BERNAL OSBORNE was not about to enter into any discussion of this measure at present, although he might say that he believed that if the plan of the hon. Member for Northamptonshire were carried out, it would lead to a national rate. He thought that the hon. Gentleman had been misrepresented in the course of this debate. He did not understand the hon. Gentleman to say that he recommended the townland division, but that the proposed division was too large. His (Mr. Osborne's) immediate object in rising was to warn the Government of the necessity of narrowing the bounds of the responsibility of landlords in Ireland with regard to the relief of the poor. He gave the Government every credit for kind and good intentions, and thought that, except the poor people who were starving, no body of men were more to be pitied than the Government. However, he must, in justice to his own conviction, say that he believed this Bill would prove a complete failure. There would be two systems going on at the same time if it were adopted—the Labour-rate Act and the Act for the Temporary Relief of the Destitute. Thus there would be two continuous drains from this country, which he, for one, was anxious to avoid. It was estimated that 500,000 of the population were employed upon the roads; and the object of the present Bill was to turn the surplus labour towards agricultural pursuits. Now, let them just see what an expense the maintenance of those 500,000 involved. There were five in each family, or, in all, 2,500,000. The lowest estimate for the support of each was a bowl of soup, which cost one penny. Now, even this scanty maintenance cost more than 70,000*l.* per week, or something above 3,000,000*l.* per year. The Government said they had given attention to all these things, and that their anxiety was to promote the cultivation of the country. But men fed upon this soup were not able to work as men ought to work on the farms. Medical men said it was a great mistake to suppose that the human frame could endure much labour upon such diet. Supplies of meat were exceedingly scanty, and in many of the workhouses deficient. The right hon. Gentleman the Secretary for Ireland had stated on a former occasion that there were 1,500,000 acres of potatoes planted, and that the value was 10*l.* per acre, making a total value of 15,000,000*l.* Three-fourths of the ordinary crop was lost, amounting to 11,250,000*l.* And the right hon. Gentleman continued to observe, that of 4,000,000 of acres of oats annually cultivated, the value of which was 14,000,000*l.*, a loss of one-third had been sustained, or about 4,600,000*l.* Thus, by the failure in the crop of potatoes and oats, a total loss of 15,916,000*l.* had been incurred. The total loss in weight was calculated at 11,250,000 tons of potatoes, and 2,270,000 quarters of oats. He believed these estimates were accurate, and that if there was a failure in cultivation there would be a want of double the present deficiency, or somewhere about 30,000,000*l.* sterling. He must enter his protest against this Bill for the temporary relief of the destitute, because he thought it would not accomplish the object the Government had in view.

VISCOUNT BERNARD was of opinion that the Bill should be passed as soon as possible, so that it might come into operation at the earliest possible day.

House in Committee.

On Clause 1 being proposed,

MR. FITZSTEPHEN FRENCH objected to the appointment of the inspectors under the relief commissioners being in the hands of those commissioners, and proposed an Amendment giving the appointment to the Lord Lieutenant.

SIR G. GREY said, that great responsibility was entrusted to the relief commissioners, and it was but fair that the selection of those agents should be vested in them.

VISCOUNT CLEMENTS objected to the constitution of the commission altogether. If the Bill was to be properly carried out, let commissioners be appointed who had time to fulfil their duties, and he thought the official persons to be appointed had already plenty to do.

MR. LABOUCHERE admitted that a great stress of business fell upon these gentlemen; but, at the same time, Sir John Burgoyne, Sir Randolph Routh, and Colonel Macgregor were in a position to render most efficient service, with occasional assistance from departments. The board was constituted in the manner in which it was thought it would work most effectively.

MR. B. OSBORNE contended that it would be impossible for Sir J. Burgoyne and Sir Randolph Routh to get through the duties the Bill imposed upon them, and argued that the business ought to be done by the local boards.

VISCOUNT CLEMENTS thought that this part of the Bill ought to be made part and parcel of the poor law, and the duties given to those who would act as Poor Law Commissioners.

Amendment withdrawn.

On the 3rd Clause,

MR. S. O'BRIEN moved an Amendment to the effect, that all magistrates having property in the electoral division (as well as resident magistrates), all subscribers of 20*l.*, and clergymen of all religious denominations, be members of the various relief committees.

MR. F. FRENCH objected to this proposal. The clause as it stood, secured the proper administration of the law.

MR. BERNAL OSBORNE was decidedly of opinion that clergymen of all denominations ought, *ex officio*, to be members of the committees. The relief committees which had heretofore been in existence, would never have been able to get on had it not been for the individual services of the clergy, both Catholic and Protestant. They hindered jobbing, and in all respects rendered most essential service. Were it not for the Catholic priests, no business at all would have been done. Votes of thanks had been passed to ladies and others; but certainly sufficient compliment had not been paid to the united efforts of the clergy, Protestant as well as Catholic. One clergyman of each denomination, at the least, ought to be on every committee.

The CHANCELLOR of the EXCHEQUER said, the constitution of the committees was vested in the hands of the Lord Lieutenant, who was, no doubt, deeply sensible of the value of the co-operation of the clergy, and would take care practically to testify his appreciation, for he had the discretion of appointing whomsoever he pleased. The third clause merely specified the persons who were to be members as of right.

Colonel CONOLLY was in favour of making all magistrates members of the committees, who had property in the electoral division. If the rule were to be restricted merely to resident magistrates, he should himself be cut out of five electoral divisions in which his estates were situated.

Mr. J. O'CONNELL thought that the clergy of all denominations ought of necessity to be members of the relief committees. They had rendered most invaluable services already, of which he could speak both from his personal experience and from the testimony of every gentleman who had been connected with them.

Viscount CLEMENTS was also in favour of the appointment of the clergy; and he particularly objected to the matter being left to the discretion of the Lord Lieutenant, who merely spoke as Sir Randolph Routh or Mr. Redington directed him.

The Earl of LINCOLN said, if it were a question of paying a compliment to the valuable services of the clergy—services which he knew to have been most efficient—he should be most desirous of doing it. But he did not think that was now in dispute; and he agreed that it would be much better to leave the matter to the discretion of the Lord Lieutenant. The committees being intended to check the existence of gross abuses, it was desirable that they should not be too extensive, for if forty or fifty members were appointed on one committee, it would be apt, especially with such an eloquent people as the Irish, to degenerate into a debating club.

Mr. SHAW thought the proviso either went too far in defining the persons who were to be *ex-officio* members of the relief committees, or not far enough. First, as regarded the justices, it should be not only the justices resident in the electoral divisions, but also those having rateable property in the electoral divisions. Secondly, as regarded the clergy, whom his hon. Friend the Member for Limerick proposed should be *ex-officio* members, he (Mr. Shaw) thought it very desirable that there should be at least one clergyman of each denomination; but if, instead of specifying any *ex-officio* members, the Government preferred that the whole should be left to the discretion of the Lord Lieutenant, he (Mr. Shaw) would not object to the proviso being omitted altogether. In reference to an observation of the noble Lord near him, the Member for Leitrim (Lord Clements), that a Lord Lieutenant was nobody, and you never could fix him with any responsibility, he (Mr. Shaw) must, in justice say, that the present Lord Lieutenant was no nonentity, or mere pageant, for, if there ever was a Lord Lieutenant, in reality as well as in name, who did his own business, and shrunk from no responsibility which that involved, it was the present Irish Lord Lieutenant.

Mr. LABOUCHERE objected to leaving in the hands of the Lord Lieutenant such a wide discretion as to place in his hands the appointment of all the members who were to distribute the funds of the ratepayers. He was certain that no slight was intended to be cast upon the clergy by the omission of their names in the Bill; but a clear distinction was made in it, by placing in the Bill the names of those only who now had a constitutional right to distribute the funds, and they ought not to go any farther. He had no doubt whatever that the Lord Lieutenant would do this year what he had done last, place on the committees the clergy of all denominations.

Mr. SMITH O'BRIEN withdrew his Amendment relating to the justices of the peace; but said he would persevere in the Amendment, that the clergy of all denominations officiating in such electoral divisions should be members of the relief committee.

The Committee divided on the Question, that the words proposed be inserted:—Ayes 32; Noes 128: Majority 96.

List of the Ayes.

Acton, Col.
Aglionby, H. A.
Archbold, R.
Arundel and Surrey, Earl of
Barron, Sir H. W.
Bellew, R. M.
Chapman, B.
Cole, hon. H. A.
Conolly, Col.
Corbally, M. E.
Dawson, hon. T. V.
Grattan, H.
Grogan, E.
Hamilton, J. H.
Hamilton, G. A.
Harris, hon. Capt.
Hayes, Sir E.
Kelly, J.
Lawless, hon. C.
Martin, T. B.
Miles, W.
Norreys, Sir D. J.
O'Brien, C.
O'Brien, T.
O'Connell, Dan. jun.
O'Connell, M. J.
O'Ferrall, R. M.
Osborne, R.
Rice, E. R.
Shaw, rt. hon. F.
Smithwith, R.
Somers, J. P.

TELLERS.

O'Brien, W. S.
O'Connell, J.

List of the Noes.

Aldam, W.
Allix, J. P.
Arkwright, G.
Baillie, Col.
Baine, W.
Barclay, D.
Barkly, H.
Baring, rt. hon. F. T.
Barnard, E. G.
Bateson, T.
Berkeley, hon. Capt.
Berkeley, hon. H. F.
Bernard, Visct.
Blackburne, J. I.
Blake, M. J.
Bodkin, J. J.
Bowring, Dr.
Brocklehurst, J.
Brotherton, J.
Brown, W.
Buck, L. W.
Buller, E.
Bunbury, W. M'C.
Clay, Sir W.
Clements, Visct.
Colebrooke, Sir T. E.
Collett, J.
Coote, Sir C. H.
Corry, rt. hon. H.
Courtenay, Lord
Cowper, hon. W. F.
Craig, W. G.
Crawford, W. S.
Damer, hon. Col.
Deedes, W.
Denison, J. E.
Dickinson, F. H.
Duncan, Visct.
Duncan, G.
Dundas, F.
Dundas, D.
Ebrington, Visct.
Egerton, Sir P.
Escott, B.
Evans, W.
Ferguson, Sir R. A.
Finch, G.
Forster, M.
French, F.
Gibson, rt. hon. T. M.
Godson, R.
Gore, hon. R.
Goulburn, rt. hon. H.
Graham, rt. hon. Sir J.
Grey, rt. hon. Sir G.
Harcourt, G. G.
Hastie, A.
Hatton, Capt. V.
Hawes, B.
Hay, Sir A. L.
Heathcoat, J.
Henley, J. W.
Hope, Sir J.
Howard, hon. C. W. G.
Howard, hon. E. G. G.
Hume, J.
Hutt, W.
James, W.
Jervis, Sir J.
Labouchere, rt. hon. H.
Lambton, H.
Lincoln, Earl of
Lockhart, A. E.
Lygon, hon. Gen.
Macaulay, rt. hon. T. B.
Mackenzie, W. F.
Mackinnon, W. A.
Maitland, T.
Mangles, R. D.
Manners, Lord J.
Maule, rt. hon. F.
Morpeth, Visct.
Morris, D.
Mostyn, hon. E. M. L.
Mure, Col.
Napier, Sir C.
Newdegate, C. N.
O'Brien, A. S.
O'Conor Don
Ord, W.
Parker, J.
Plumridge, Capt.
Power, J.
Protheroe, E. D.
Pulsford, R.
Rawdon, Col.
Reid, Col.
Repton, G. W. J.
Rich, H.
Roebuck, J. E.
Ross, D. R.
Rutherfurd, A.
Scrope, G. P.
Seymour, Lord
Sheridan, R. B.
Somerville, Sir W. M.
Spooner, R.
Stansfield, W. R. C.
Stewart, J.
Taylor, E.
Thornely, T.
Troubridge, Sir E. T.
Turner, E.
Vane, Lord H.
Verner, Sir W.
Vesey, hon. T.
Vivian, J. H.
Waddington, H. S.
Walker, R.
Warburton, H.
Ward, H. G.
Wawn, J. T.
Williams, W.
Wood, rt. hon. Sir C.
Wood, Col. T.
Wyse, T.
Yorke, H. R.
Young, J.

TELLERS.

Tufnell, H.
Hill, Lord Marcus

Clause agreed to.

On Clause 7,

Viscount CLEMENTS begged to call attention to Clause 18, which must be read together with the 7th. He had no doubt that this Bill would pass nearly in its present form; but he, nevertheless, felt it his duty to point out the dangers which they incurred in passing it. As he had already stated on a former occasion, the ill effects of the Labour-rate Act had arisen from the neglect of the Government to define who were to be relieved and who not. The same defect appeared in this Bill; as it stood, the right hon. Gentleman the Secretary for Ireland might himself go and receive relief. The effect of this Bill would be to cause a scramble for relief; and the farmers would receive relief to the exclusion of the poor man. There were many more difficulties in the Bill than the Government expected. In his own parish, there was not a single individual capable of keeping the accounts of the soup required to be kept by this Bill; and unless the Government reconsidered this clause and the 18th, they would find the difficulties insurmountable. If the commissioners were the most honest and the most clever, as well as the firmest, men, they would be unable to resist the pressure which would be made upon them. Under the Labour-rate Act, the Government had adopted as a test a rating to the amount of 6*l.*, which any person who was acquainted with Ireland must know to be absurd. The duty of the Government was, in the first place, to define who were to receive relief; some rating test must be laid down, and he would humbly suggest a 4*l.* rating as the pivot. No person rated to that amount should by the Bill be allowed to receive relief under it.

Mr. LABOUCHERE said, that the

question raised by his noble Friend on this clause was, whether the distribution of relief should be left to the committees, or whether the Bill should give an exact definition of the persons to be relieved; and it would be, in his opinion, extremely unwise in the House to lay down any such definition. It would, he believed, be impossible to do so without the greatest mischief; and he thought that it would be much better to leave it to the discretion of the commissioners. He acknowledged that under the Labour-rate Act shameful abuses had been practised, and that in too many instances the relief had been given to those who were able to procure subsistence for themselves, and so far, therefore, to the exclusion of the really destitute. He was not sanguine enough to hope that under the present Act all abuses of that kind would be avoided; but Government had framed the Bill with the greatest consideration; and unless they were assisted by those who had local knowledge and influence, let them do what they might, let them employ what staff of officers they would, he was afraid they would not succeed. He would say, however, that obviously there was not the same temptation to abuse when the relief was given in food; and he did hope that the Government would receive the cordial support of the local committees. His noble Friend had said, that it should be an invariable rule to give no relief to the persons rated to the poor rate to the amount of 4*l*.; but he (Mr. Labouchere) believed that in some districts, if any such strict rule were laid down, many persons so rated might perish from starvation. It was true, as had been noticed by the noble Lord, that as a general, though not an universal rule, under the Labour-rate Act, they had adopted a 6*l*. rating test; but he knew, from his own experience, that even that test, if adopted as an universal rule, would have left many really destitute persons without relief. He therefore objected to any such definition as the noble Lord desired.

Mr. F. FRENCH could, from his own experience, confirm the statement of the right hon. Gentleman the Secretary for Ireland as to the 4*l*. test.

Mr. BELLEW said, that it was not, in his opinion, desirable to establish any definite line, beyond which no relief should be given. As to the Bill in general, he thought it would have been better not to have had any such temporary measure, but to have relied upon the permanent poor law, because, at the expiration of the period for which the measure was to last, there must be an interregnum, during which there would be a strong necessity for some similar measure.

Clause agreed to.

On Clause 8,

Colonel CONOLLY thought it very hard that the guardians should be required to find money which notoriously they had not received. He had received a letter from a guardian in Ireland, stating that they could not collect the rates; and he thought it a very unjust thing to make the guardians, under another Act, responsible for the rates which they could not collect.

Mr. BERNAL OSBORNE said, that this was a money question, and could assure the House that not one farthing of these rates could be collected—not until after next harvest at all events. He begged therefore to suggest to the Government, whether it would not be wise to let the guardians of unions charge interest on money which they advanced.

Mr. ROEBUCK begged to ask the hon. Member how they could expect to borrow money, when they were told that not one farthing of these rates would be levied. That was a statement which he had made on a former occasion, and not a single Member from Ireland had omitted to abuse him for making it. Shortly, the House would have another clause to consider, which pledged the money of this country upon the faith of these rates, that would never be collected. He had before warned the Government and the country that the money so advanced could not be repaid; and when he made that statement, the hon. and gallant Member for Armagh (Colonel Rawdon) said that it was a direct attack upon the honour of Ireland. When these matters came out, they were of great interest to the people of this country. Let them not be persuaded by one set of Irish Gentlemen that they were lending money which the high honour of these Gentlemen would compel them to pay; and by another class of Irish Members, quite as honest, but rather more plain-spoken, that they were quite willing to receive the money, but that they never intended to repay it. He had one other remark to make, in reference to one observation of the noble Lord opposite, which was this, that this money, like that already expended, would be expended, not on the suffering poor, but that all the charity of England would go to minister to the grasping desire of those who were trading on the miseries of their fellow-countrymen. Such was the statement of the noble Lord in substance, though, perhaps, not expressed in language so strong; so that they had these two clear propositions, that the money advanced by this country would be spent, not only uselessly, but corruptly; and that the money of his honest and industrious fellow-countrymen was not on any occasion to be returned to that Exchequer from which, under false pretences, it had been withdrawn.

VISCOUNT CLEMENTS admitted that the statement of the hon. and learned Member was in the main correct. He (Lord Clements) asserted most positively that the money had been mis-spent, to the knowledge of the Government; that the farmers had received the relief, and the poor man had been defrauded. In the poor-law union of which he was himself one of the board of guardians, the board had been obliged to levy a new rate before they had succeeded in collecting the old. In fact, there was 1,000*l.* of the old rate due at the time. With respect to the present measure, he could assure the House that his solemn conviction was, that in the main it would be impossible to collect the rates till the next harvest, if it would be practicable even then. He was quite aware that what he was saying would prove unpleasant to many Members, but a sense of duty compelled him to say that the consequences of the calamity were only beginning to be felt. His conviction was, that there would be no crops next year; he held it to be physically impossible that one half of the land could be cropped, and for this simple reason, that no manure had been collected. The land was exhausted, and even the burning system had failed. The people were altogether broken down, and he had himself presented a petition to that House, signed by 2,000 poor people, praying to be enabled to emigrate as a *dernier ressort.*

MR. ROSS thought that the hon. Member for Bath had misunderstood the remarks made by Gentlemen opposite as to the non-payment of rates. These Gentlemen did not mean to assert that that portion which fell upon the landlords would not be paid. He emphatically denied the imputation which had been made, that hon. Gentlemen connected with Ireland came before the House to solicit assistance to save them from ruin. He would like to see the man who would attempt to prove that because Irish Members supported measures calculated to give employment to their starving countrymen, through the instrumentality of pecuniary advances, they were actuated by mercenary motives. For himself, he lived in a part of the country where no human being was in danger of perishing from want of food; but this did not make him the less anxious to assist in procuring relief for less favoured districts. With respect to the landlords, he did not know so much about those of the south as he did about those of the north; but of the latter he could say that many of them were an honour and credit to the class to which they belonged.

MR. STAFFORD O'BRIEN was surprised at the ignorance which had been displayed on the part of some Members of the Government as to the relative circumstances of occupying tenants in Ireland. Why, many of those persons whose holdings were rated above 4*l.* were neither paying their rents nor cultivating their lands. He was convinced that in many parts of the country, he would not say in all parts, it would be next to impossible to collect rates at all, with the exception of what was payable by the higher classes. Members connected with Ireland had distinctly told the House that much of the money about to be advanced could not be repaid, and that in many cases the assistance which was intended to be rendered to the poor would be diverted into other channels. With regard to the manner in which the public money granted for the relief of the distressed people had been expended, there had been much cause for well-grounded complaint. A system of intimidation had prevailed. The farmers who had the management of the affairs had, in some districts placed themselves and their relatives upon the relief works; and the disturbances which had taken place had not been committed by the poor, but by those clamorous persons who had established and acted upon a regular system of intimidation. He recommended the House to leave as little as possible in the power of such persons. Let the difficulties which presented themselves be settled in the House, and be provided for in the Bill before it passed. At least, if it were not done, let no one say they had not been sufficiently forewarned.

The CHANCELLOR OF THE EXCHEQUER said, that the picture which had been laid before the House of the present condition and future prospects of Ireland, afforded little encouragement to the Government to persevere with the present or any other measure. Still it was not till they had taken the whole subject under most painful consideration, that the Government had arrived at the conclusion that the present measure was the best which could be proposed under existing circumstances. As to the abuses which had prevailed under the Labour-rate Act, in some districts the relief committees must bear part of the blame. In Clare, Captain Wynne, the officer employed under the Board of Works, struck off, in two weeks, from the list of persons employed on the public works, no fewer than 6,000 names. He was not sanguine enough to believe that all fraud or abuse had been effectually guarded against; but it was believed that the best check which could exist was the one adopted—that of placing the working of the measure in the hands of those who had to bear the expense of it. He believed in some parts it would be next to impossible that the rates could be collected; but the portion due by the landlords would be realized, and he had no doubt that a considerable portion of what was payable by the tenants would also be paid. Nothing was so false as to say that an indisposition to fulfil pecuniary engagements prevailed throughout Ireland. He believed, that in many instances where rates had not been collected, the fault lay with the parties whose business it was to make the collection. Under the present Bill, more summary power was given to enforce payment than previously existed. The hon. Member for Donegal had stated, that in requiring the guardians to collect the rates under the Bill, the Government were asking them to perform a duty which they were not called upon to perform. This was a mistake. The guardians were bound to collect all rates for the benefit of the poor, and this would include the rates imposed under the present Bill. In the case of the Castlebar union the parties in arrear were not the poorer ratepayers, but large holders of land; and the fault of allowing the arrears was attributable to the guardians. To guard, however, against the imperfect performance of duty by such parties, the Bill now submitted contained a provision for superseding them, and appointing a paid board. He thought, that, although the probability of repayment was to some extent doubtful, still it was the duty of the Government to persevere in its efforts to afford relief to the starving population. Such was the object of the Bill; and he was sure that if an appeal were made to the country, the course pursued by the Government would meet with general approval.

Mr. BERNAL OSBORNE did not agree in thinking that the relief afforded under the Labour-rate Act had been abused by the circumstance of the small farmers, or their sons, having availed themselves of its advantages. These persons were driven by distress to the Government works. He hoped that what had occurred in the county of Clare was an exception to what had been generally experienced; he was sure that such was the case at Castlebar. As to the payment of the rate, he had never asserted that non-payment would be universal; he had always excepted that part which was payable by the landlords.

Mr. C. O'BRIEN accused the persons connected with the Board of Works of unfair dealing and favouritism. The object of these persons, he said, was to keep themselves and their numerous cousins and favourites in employment, no matter whether the works were profitable or not. The people of the county of Clare, who were remarkable for their attachment to the principles of civil and religious liberty, had been represented in the reports of the officers of the Board of Works as savages, and everything that was bad. As to the payment of the rates, he could state, that in the remote district where he had lived for the greater part of his life, and where he had endeavoured to do the utmost good in his power, the rates had been paid. He could state this from personal knowledge; for he was the chairman of the board of guardians. The ratepayers would no doubt have to contend with difficulties between the present time and the next harvest; but abundant security existed that the Government would be paid. He hoped that an official inquiry would be ordered into the allegations made by the persons connected with the Board of Works.

Mr. P. SCROPE hoped the House would not be led away from the main subject by matters of subsidiary interest. The question for consideration was, first, how were millions to be saved from starvation; and, in the next place, how was the money of the people of England to be protected from being wasted and squandered in jobbing. After the warnings which had been given by the Gentlemen opposite, as to the non-collection of rates, the House would do well to consider how far it would be serviceable to place a larger portion of the rates upon the landlords. That suggestion had been made to him by many of the landlords themselves. If an effort were made to collect the rates from the small occupiers, a recurrence of the scenes which took place in 1834, when the Government was forced to employ horse and foot to assist the civil power in the collection of tithes, might be apprehended. The resistance then offered to the payment of tithes resulted in fixing the burden upon the landlord. He thought it would be well to follow that precedent under present circumstances. Were this course pursued, the landlords would take care that no jobbing occurred.

The CHANCELLOR OF THE EXCHEQUER rose to explain. In referring to the county of Clare, he had merely spoken of it as an exception to what had occurred generally in Ireland. Let it be remembered, that it was in Clare that the Lord Lieutenant was obliged to issue a letter discontinuing the works, in consequence of the conduct of the people; and also that it was in that county that a murderous attack was made upon a person entrusted with the discharge of a public duty. For the satisfaction of the House, he would read the letter of Captain Wynne, which communicated the fact of his having struck off an immense number of persons from the relief works. In this letter, the Captain stated that he had struck off three thousand persons, and expected to strike off an equal number in the following week. This act had effectually stopped the mouths of thousands of clamorous persons, whose only claim to employment was, that persons employed on the works were as well off as they themselves were. The disbanding of the persons had led to their departure, and the departure of the other candidates to their farms. These were matters of fact which could not be controverted.

MR. C. O'BRIEN repeated his charge against Captain Wynne and the other officers of the Board of Works, and called upon the Government to grant a Committee of Inquiry.

MAJOR MACNAMARA remarked, that Captain Wynne had never visited the relief committee, and was not, consequently, conversant with the facts.

MR. J. O'CONNELL considered that the statement which had been made as to the abuses which had existed, were exaggerated. In regard to the rate, there was, no doubt, great peril that they would not be collected in many parts. But what was then to be done? They could not get money from those who had none; at the same time, he was persuaded that the landlords would pay their share of the rate. For his own part, however, he was of opinion that the Government should resort to a large loan to Ireland, in order to keep the people alive.

MR. SMITH O'BRIEN said, it would be impossible to collect the rates in certain parts of the country; but there were large portions of it in which he was sure there would be a great and honourable disposition to pay them. He would suggest that the Government should, however, give up all idea of collecting rates from the smaller occupiers.

MR. DISRAELI said, that the hon. Member for Clare (Major Macnamara) had complained of the conduct of a public functionary, Captain Wynne; but, in the correspondence which had been laid upon the Table, there was a letter from that gentleman, a passage from which he would read to the House. It was as follows, and was dated Ennis, December 5, 1846:—

> "I regret to say that matters are not improving with us in this district, nor can I expect them to improve so long as yesterday's scenes continue to be enacted daily.
>
> "The extraordinary presentment sessions at Ennistimon, held yesterday, were a second edition of those at Corofin. Major Macnamara, M.P., was in the chair, supported by Mr. Cornelius O'Brien, M.P., Mr. J. O'Brien, M.P., &c. The two first hours were occupied in attack and defence, without ever once touching upon the business of the day. It was obvious that it was not to transact business they had come there, and the result of course was that nothing was done, and nothing can be done till another extraordinary presentment sessions be called. This must lead to considerable inconvenience, as on many of the works in the barony the funds will be very soon exhausted, and the men will be obliged to go four or five miles to others, for which there remain presentments. All this, together with the evil consequences of leading the people to expect to be turned into their own gardens to till, I explained all to no purpose. I therefore had but one course to pursue, that of protesting against the entire proceedings, in which I was followed by Mr. Hill and Mr. Gamble. I, and the other officers of your board, have strong reasons to complain of the conduct of the two county Members, who appeared to come there for the sole purpose of holding us up, one and all, to the assassin, and hallooing on a mob of the very worst description who were present. Can it be wondered at, that the stewards and overseers will not discharge their duties, and that the men on the works are doing literally nothing but what they please? When I give directions to any of them, they resign,

rather than carry those directions into effect; and, I confess, I can scarcely expect any other course from any of them not gifted with strong nerves in the present state of county Clare society."

Now this letter should be read by every Gentleman in the House. He would say nothing as to the rights of the case; but he had thought it but fair and proper that that letter should be made known.

MR. C. O'BRIEN said, that nothing that fell from either his hon. Colleague or himself, on the occasion referred to could have led Captain Wynne to write that letter, which, in fact, was written by him with a view to get himself into the favour of the board. The committee over which his Colleague had presided was not at Ennistimon, but at another place; and he must say that it ill became Captain Wynne to talk of his Colleague and himself as he had done; for Captain Wynne had lately had a transaction which ought to have unfitted him for any place of authority. Captain Wynne, however, was absent, and he had no wish to say anything behind his back that he would not say before his face; and he would now only add that, if the House would grant him a Committee, he would undertake to prove before it that what he had said was true.

MR. LABOUCHERE regretted the introduction of this personal question; but after what had been said of Captain Wynne, he did feel it to be only due to a public servant, who was absent, to add his testimony to that of his right hon. Friend (Sir C. Wood) to the fact, that it was the opinion of every Member of the Irish Government acquainted with Captain Wynne's conduct in the discharge of his public duty in Clare, that, though many officers of the Board of Works had distinguished themselves by the manner in which they had performed their duties, there was no man whose conduct had been more conspicuous under very difficult circumstances, or who had played a more gallant part than Captain Wynne. He had never seen Captain Wynne in his life, and he only bore this testimony to his public conduct from a sense of justice. He did not enter into the disputes between that gentleman and the hon. Member for Clare; but after what had been said of Captain Wynne, he felt it due to him to say that, in regard to the general scope and tenor of his conduct, the course he had pursued entitled him to the gratitude of that county and of the country, for the manner in which he had secured the public peace. He agreed that there had been many abuses in connexion with the public works; but it was most unjust to argue, from their prevalence in particular cases, that abuses had been the general rule in respect of these works. In many places—as in Wicklow, &c.—the public works had been very well conducted, and the destitute had been employed; whilst those who ought not to be upon the works had been kept off. He did hope that the House would now be permitted to proceed with the Bill before it without further interruption.

MR. C. O'BRIEN contended that he had a just right of complaint against Captain Wynne, for printing a letter full of abuse of his Colleague and himself, whilst he suppressed the report in which they were acquitted of what had been laid to their charge.

MR. SHAW said, that he felt much of the previous discussion to be very degrading to Ireland, and calculated to convey a most unjust impression to the public mind in England, as regarded both the persons to be relieved by the measures introduced by Her Majesty's Government, and the prospect of repayment of the money to be advanced for that purpose. He did not deny that there had been some abuses and mismanagement under the Labour Act; and, considering that a new machinery had to be, as it were in a moment, applied to the supply of food for millions of persons who had lost their usual means of support, it was not surprising that there should have been some abuses, and some blundering; but it was unreasonable to argue from the abuse of a system against the use of it, and to make the exception as if it were the general rule of the country. There was great confusion in the minds of English Gentlemen as to the term "farmers" in Ireland; for when it was said that there were numbers of farmers getting employment on the public works in Ireland, what kind of farmers were they? Why, unfortunate holders of two or three acres of ground, who had lost in their potato crop their whole winter's supply of food, and who, with their families, must inevitably have starved if they did not by some means earn wages as labourers. He (Mr. Shaw) would not for a moment defend the abuse of a substantial farmer, or his family, being so employed; but he did not believe there was a more destitute class in all Ireland than that of the so-called farmers, whose case he had been describing. The noble Lord (Lord Clements) spoke of perhaps the most distressed county in Ireland, the county of Leitrim. A gentleman possessing property there had told him (Mr. Shaw) within the last two days, that finding his local agent was unable to collect any rent, he had sent a very active and intelligent agent from another part of Ireland to report to him upon the case. That agent assured him, that where 700*l.* should have been collected in the ordinary course, he could get but 5*l.*; that he had visited the house of every tenant; that there was in them scarcely an article of furniture, or a morsel of food; and that, so far from asking them for money, it would be absolutely necessary to give them, not only seed to sow their land, but food to prevent their families from starving. Such persons must be relieved, and, no doubt, could not for the present pay either rents or rates; but still, he hoped and believed, that in the greater part of Ireland the rates could be levied; and sure he was, that no party of men ever made greater exertions or sacrifices than the abused and maligned landlords of Ireland were doing at the present time to alleviate the distress that surrounded them. They were ready to meet the call that the Chancellor of the Exchequer and other Members of the Government had so frequently made upon them that night, cordially to co-operate in carrying out the remedial measures that might be passed by that House; and they would be no parties to any fraud upon the public treasury. For his own part, he (Mr. Shaw) deeply regretted that there had been a necessity for any appeal to the charity or generosity of England; he had at one time hoped and expected that Ireland, by a great and independent effort, could have righted herself; but a vast calamity had overtaken them, for which they were not answerable. It was a national calamity; and it was not unjust to England, or degrading to Ireland, that it should be met by the national resources.

Clause ordered to stand part of the Bill.

On Clause 12 being proposed,

Mr. ROEBUCK moved that the Chairman report progress, and ask leave to sit again.

Motion agreed to, and Committee to sit again.

House adjourned at a quarter past Twelve o'clock.

HOUSE OF LORDS,

Monday, February 8, 1847.

Minutes.] *Sat first.*—The Earl Waldegrave, after the Death of his Nephew.

Public Bills.—2ª Chelsea Pensions.

Reported.—Buck Wheat, &c. Importation.

LOANS TO IRELAND.

Earl FITZWILLIAM wished to move—

> "For an Account (since the Union) of all Sums of Money advanced on Loan by the Imperial Treasury, for Public Works or other Purposes in Ireland, specifying in the Case of each Loan the Purpose for which, the Parties to whom, the Conditions on which each such Loan has been advanced, and how far such Conditions have been as yet complied with; distinguishing all Advances and Repayment made, since the Establishment of the Board of Works."

There seemed to be a general impression out of doors, and in the organs of public opinion, that when money was lent to Ireland it was never paid back again. Now he was desirous of showing that no loans had been more punctually repaid than those made to Ireland.

Lord BROUGHAM thought that the return moved for would form a very valuable document. As to the punctual repayment talked of, he had his own opinions on that point. However, if there were any delusion abroad, the sooner it was dispelled the better. He held in his hand another return from those unhappy people, the inhabitants of Liverpool. ["Hear, hear!" *and a laugh.*] Really, it was no laughing matter for them, nor one for which he was aware of a remedy, for in the course of three days, upwards of 5,400 additional Irish paupers had been flung upon them. Nothing, however, could exceed the liberality, the generosity of the people of Liverpool under these trying circumstances. They neither scrupled to contribute their time nor their money. He wished to explain that he had never used any invective against the authorities of Liverpool in reference to this subject. He had been misinformed as to the precise day of the opening of soup-kitchens; but he had never meant to undervalue the generosity and energy of Liverpool in making provision for the poor flung upon it. While upon the matter of mis-statement, he had to complain of a misrepresentation, in a very respectable morning print, of his sentiments as to education. He was there held up as a person entertaining on this important subject very heterodox and very loose views indeed. Now, he thought that in stating what he had stated upon the subject, he had been uttering very orthodox views. He had expressly said that he would rather see a Bill providing for the education of the people in the tenets of the Church of England, than no Bill at all; but he was described as a person to whom it was indifferent whether the people were brought up in the religion of Christ, or in the religion of the Mother of Christ, meaning thereby the Roman Catholic faith; and this after he had expressed the greatest dislike to the doctrines of the Roman Catholic Church—although, of course, he highly respected many of its members. Not only indeed were his sentiments thus misrepresented as to the Catholic church, but he was stated to be quite indifferent as to whether the people were educated in the religion of Mahomet or of Vishnu. Now, really, no person had more entire belief than he was imbued with in the superiority of the Christian religion over all others, and of the Protestant over all other sects of the Christian faith, and no person was more convinced of the necessity of the inculcation of that faith than he was.

The MARQUESS of LANSDOWNE rose to say a few words with reference to the pressure and distress at Liverpool, which had been alluded to by his noble and learned Friend, and which he admitted to be of a very extensive and serious nature. His noble and learned Friend had said that the evil was one for which he could see no remedy. He (the Marquess of Lansdowne) trusted that the remedy would arise from the speedy adoption by that and the other House of Parliament of measures calculated to create a great additional stimulus to employment in Ireland. Care, of course, would be taken that the funds to be so expended would be secured in that manner which, as his noble Friend near him (Earl Fitzwilliam) had observed, had been found efficient in causing their punctual repayment. He willingly bore his testimony to the generosity and activity in affording relief of the people of Liverpool, and he again expressed his confident hope that the measures in progress would be found as efficacious as their authors anticipated.

LORD BROUGHAM was not so sanguine upon that point. He feared that the large proportion of the people of Ireland who were taught to think that they had only to come over to Liverpool to live without working, would prefer a scanty subsistence there without labour, to a more plentiful one at home, where they would be obliged to work for it. He thought that some measure in the nature of a poor law would be of service in times of temporary distress, by preventing the calamity from having such a grievous effect as that of sending myriads of paupers from Ireland to prey on the industrious people of Liverpool.

LORD MONTEAGLE feared that distress in Ireland must always—unless indeed they were to resort to some such measure as stopping the freedom of intercourse between the two countries—be a matter in which the people of England would be as much interested as those of Ireland. So long as there existed a disproportion between the rate of wages of the two countries, there would always be a popular tendency to emigrate from the country in which wages were lowest, to that in which they were highest. The question to consider was, how to prevent this; and the only legitimate and effectual means appeared to him to be those of improving the condition of the people in the country from which they were driven, so as to render it as nearly as possible equal to the popular condition in the country to which they were driven. All that tended to improve the state of the working classess in Ireland, would also tend to keep them in their own country, and prevent them from overflowing and breeding pauperism in England. At the same time they must distinguish between permanent and occasional emigration from Ireland. The occasional emigration of the harvesters to this country was of the greatest possible service to British industry; but the permanent settler living on a lower description of food, and being in a lower state of civilization than those about him, had an undoubted effect in depreciating the condition of the population of which he formed a member. No remedy would relieve the people of this country that did not raise the condition of the people of Ireland. He begged to suggest to their Lordships that in the course of legislation on which they were entering, nothing ought to be considered as inconsistent in the interests of England and Ireland. They were bound up together; what would improve the one would relieve the other. He would, before he sat down, beg to say a few words on the condition of the people of Ireland as respected the employment of the poor on public works. They were about to adopt a great change in the system of public works to be pursued; upwards of 500,000 men were employed under the present method. They were about to adopt another system. The change, however, would cause an interval, for which some provision must be made before the transition could be safely effected. Now in the county with which he was connected, a proposition had been made, to the effect that Government should entertain favourably the execution of some of those great railway projects recommended in Mr. Drummond's report. That was a report drawn up by men who had nothing to do with shares or companies. But the question was not now merely one of bolstering up speculative companies—although he did not mean to say that such a course might not sometimes be wisely adopted—the question was whether or not great public works which could not be otherwise executed should be carried on by assistance from Government, in the hope and expectation that these works would remove the enormous difficulties which stood in the way of disbanding an army—for an army in everything but discipline they were—of 500,000 men, after the cessation of one species of employment, and previously to the commencement of another. He rejoiced that the subject had been introduced into the other House of Parliament. The principle upon which the proposed measure was founded, was one most worthy of the deepest consideration. He had heard with satisfaction, that within a very short period the Government had sanctioned a considerable loan to a very important work of the nature in question; he meant the railway from Waterford to Limerick, to which 20,000*l.* had been advanced by the Treasury. He did not mean that Government ought to come forward and help all railway schemes. He did not believe that the noble Lord in the other House meant that it should; but he did hold that in no way could the emergency be better met than by the Government coming, and, with a just and wise discrimination betwixt useful and useless schemes, providing for the interval which must elapse between the cessation of one sort of work and the commencement of another; an interval which could not be better met than by favourably considering the claims of companies formed for the advancement of railway enterprise.

LORD BROUGHAM explained. He had complained only of the Irish who came to this country not to work but to beg. They could not do without the Irish harvesters who every year came over. They were a quiet, well-conducted body of men; and in the district with which he was connected, they had never committed an outrage, or even robbed a hen-roost. They were a most well-conducted, well-disposed set of people.

LORD MONTEAGLE explained that the paupers who had deluged Liverpool had not come from his part of the country. He had great pleasure in informing their Lordships, on the authority of bankers in New York, that upwards of 160,000*l.* had within a short period been remitted from America by old Irish emigrants to their friends at home, for the purposes of emigration and relief.

EARL FITZWILLIAM also bore his testimony to the character of the Irish harvesters, many of whom, coming principally from Mayo and Roscommon, he had been year after year in the habit of employing. He would take this opportunity of impressing on their Lordships that the present was not a mere Irish calamity. Anything that fell on so great a limb of the empire as Liverpool, must be considered as something which affected the universal interest of the country. Parliament, in dealing with Ireland, must be actuated by British and not English feelings. He saw it stated in those organs of public opinion which they every morning received, that he noble Lord in the other House, who had introduced a great Irish scheme, wished merely to fill the bellies of the starving people of Ireland. If his noble Friend had proposed it simply with that view, it would be found utterly inadequate for the purpose. But he conceived that the noble Lord took larger and more comprehensive views, and that his scheme was brought forward merely in the belief that it would contribute to the abatement of the evils which afflicted Ireland in redundancy of population, and want of equilibrium between the demand for and the supply of labour. The empire was now in a great crisis, but great crises furnished great opportunities. Let not this one be thrown away. Let not England be niggardly. He had just heard that 20,000*l.* had been advanced by Government to prosecute the works on a railway in the south of Ireland. He rejoiced to hear that the principle was being acted upon; but as an Englishman he blushed at the smallness of the amount. It would not do for English individuals to be generous—the English community must be generous. The greatest generosity would, in fact, be the best wisdom. If England did not raise Ireland, Ireland would sink England. He repeated that we were now in a great crisis, and he again warned their Lordships to beware of neglecting the opportunity which it gave them.

The Marquess of WESTMEATH observed, with reference to what had fallen from the noble and learned Lord respecting the influx of paupers into Liverpool, that as the law at present stood, Irish paupers coming into England might be sent back again to Ireland at the expense of the parish removing them. Now it was quite clear, that if matters went on as they were going, Parliament must either do something to prevent paupers coming from Ireland to England, or grant money to Liverpool to enable them to bear the expense of sending the Irish paupers back again. Irish paupers might be prevented from coming over to Liverpool, and that would be no deprivation of their personal liberty. He threw this point out for the consideration of the noble and learned Lord. They ought to look forward to the manner in which the people of Ireland were to subsist six months after the present crisis was past; and as there was at present a willingness on the part of the landlords to meet the Government half way in assisting the people to emigrate, he hoped that the subject of emigration would be reconsidered by the Government. If they did not do so, they would assuredly have cause to regret it.

The Marquess of LANSDOWNE said, that he should have no objection to the Motion, if his noble Friend would so far amend it as to add the words "distinguishing all advances and repayments made since the establishment of the Board of Works."

Motion, as amended, agreed to.

CHARGES ON LAND IN IRELAND.

The Earl of MOUNTCASHELL moved, pursuant to notice, for—

> "A Return of the Total Amount of the Sums appearing to be due for Debt, Damages, and Costs upon all Decrees, Orders, and Judgments in Ireland, re-docketed pursuant to the Act 9th George IV., c. 35, or registered pursuant to the 7th and 8th Victoria, c. 90, and now appearing to be re-docketed or registered in the Office for registering Judgments in Ireland; distinguishing those which are in Debt from those which are in Case."

The noble Earl stated, that he wished to ascertain as far as possible, to what extent the land of Ireland was at present liable. He believed, from information that he had received, that this return would be perfectly practicable. On the subject of his Motion, he would call the attention of their Lordships to what the Act 9th George IV., chap. 35, stated, as to the entry of judgments which affected land in Ireland; and he would particularly refer to the fifth section, as to the duties which were to be observed in the Registry Office; and as all he required was to refer to the number of the judgments, taking out the amount of each, and telling up the whole, he did not look upon that as a very difficult or tedious matter. He did not want to inquire into the private affairs of any individual; all he sought for was the total amount of charges which affected the whole of the land of Ireland, from which return, if furnished, he would be enabled to prove that that country was already so heavily taxed, and so pressed with such a weight of incumbrances, as to be scarcely capable of bearing much more. The whole of the annual rental of Ireland was little more than 13,000,000*l.*, about 10,450,000*l.* of which was paid in interest on money lent, so that there could not be more than about 3,000,000*l.* at the disposal of the landlords. Therefore, if new taxes, to the amount of 13,000,000*l.* or 14,000,000*l.*, were imposed, consistently with existing engagements, it would be out of their power to meet such a charge. The effect would be to crush the landlords, to injure the country, and very probably to reduce the whole population to such a state as might make it very difficult in times to come to govern Ireland. He would not then enter into the state of the poverty of Ireland, as another opportunity would offer; yet he could not but observe that that poverty was too apparent when he compared the amount of money deposited in the savings banks of England and Wales with the amount deposited in those of Ireland. The present state of trade and commerce were also but too evident signs of its depressed condition; and with a debt of 100,000,000*l.*, it was but too obvious that the landed proprietors were not in a position to meet those enormous sums about to be imposed on that country.

The LORD CHANCELLOR said, the noble Lord was no doubt most anxious to obtain the required information for an important object—it might be desirable to have a return of the amount of incumbrances on the estates of Ireland if it were at all attainable; but, like many other objects equally desirable, the application of the noble Lord laboured under this disadvantage, that it was wholly unattainable. The design of the office in question being to protect purchasers of lands, the judgments or charges on lands were there registered; but, when satisfaction was made, the entries might or might not be entered. The office would show the amount of judgments existing at any specified time; but it might afford no information as to what were the existing charges. He was quite sure that if accurate and satisfactory information could be obtained, it would supply to their Lordships those materials which would be most important; but although he knew that that information could not be had, yet he addressed a letter to the Registration Office in Dublin, in answer to which communication it was stated—

> "That although several sums due for debts, damages, and costs upon decrees, orders, and judgments in Ireland, which were originally obtained under the 9th Geo. IV., chap. 35, and subsequently re-registered, pursuant to the 7th and 8th Vic., chap 90, appeared in the books of the office as originally marked therein; yet he (the writer) had no means to ascertain whether any or what portion of those sums were paid or not—nor had he materials to distinguish those judgments which were in debt, from those which were in case. He begged further to state, that a return so imperfect could not be made out without considerable interruption to the current business of the office, and that it would be attended with considerable expense and great delay."

Such was the reply; and in his (the Lord Chancellor's) opinion, a return which would necessarily be so imperfect, and information which would be so erroneous, would be worse than no information at all. As great expense, considerable delay, and an interruption to the public business in the office at Dublin would be the only result, and as the noble Earl must be satisfied that the returns could not be satisfactorily obtained, he hoped the noble Earl would withdraw his Motion.

The **Earl of MOUNTCASHELL** asked, how was it that lawyers, by searching the courts, ascertained the state of the property which was the subject of their inquiry? By what means did they ascertain so accurately whether charges were outstanding or not? If property was about to be sold, the intending purchaser took good care to know all that concerned it; and until that was done a clear title could not be made out by the seller. While he was anxious to get the required information for the reasons already stated, yet he was willing to yield to whatever their Lordships would suggest.

Lord MONTEAGLE would give one fact in confirmation of what had been stated by the Lord Chancellor. He was the trustee of a large estate in Ireland, and he knew the charges by which it was affected; yet he called for a return from the Registration Office as to its liabilities—and what was the result? The return so furnished exceeded in amount double the real existing charges, and which was owing to the carelessness and negligence of the officers not entering debts long since paid. That circumstance, which was within his own knowledge, proved how useless would be the present application. He hoped, therefore, the noble Earl would withdraw his Motion.

Motion withdrawn.

House adjourned.

HOUSE OF COMMONS,

Monday, February 8, 1847.

Minutes.] Public Bills.—1° Landed Property (Ireland). 2° Customs Duties.

Petitions Presented. By Mr. Hawes, from Proprietors of Land in New Zealand, respecting the Sale of Land in that Colony.—By Mr. Sidney Herbert, from Solicitors of Stafford, and Warminster, for Repeal of the Duty on Attorneys' Certificates.—By Viscount Sandon, from Liverpool, and Mr. Thornely, from Wolverhampton, for Repeal of the Duty on Copper Ores.—By Mr. Baine, from Greenock, and Mr. Bannerman, from Aberdeen, for carrying into effect the Recommendations of the Select Committee respecting Lighthouses.—From Edinburgh, for Repeal of the Duty on Paper.—By Viscount Bernard, from Distillers of Bandon, and Mr. Power, from Distillers in Ireland, against the Proposed Reduction of Duty on Rum.—By Mr. Bouverie, from several places, against the Proposed Alterations repecting Sugar and Rum.—By Mr. Wilson Patten, from Withnell, for Reduction of the Duty on Tea.—By Mr. Williams, from Cadogan Williams, for the Establishment of Agricultural Schools.—By Viscount Clements, from Mohill, in the County of Leitrim, for the Encouragement of Emigration (Ireland).—By several Hon. Members, from a great number of places, in Favour of the Ten Hours Factory Bill.—By the Earl of Lincoln, from Richard Weston Mara, for Redress of Grievances.—By Mr. Greene, from Guardians of Lancaster Union, for Alteration of the Poor Law (Ireland).—By Mr. Leslie, from Guardians of Monaghan Union, against the Poor Relief (Ireland) Bill.—By Mr. Bankes, and other Hon. Members, from several places, for Repeal or Alteration of the Poor Removal Act.—By Viscount Sandon, from Liverpool, against laying the Burden on the Revenue for the Relief of Ireland.

THE NAVY.

Sir C. NAPIER wished to put a question to the Secretary of the Admiralty. Last year the House had granted 30,000*l.* for the retired list of the Navy. It was promised that the admirals should be reduced to 150, and the captains to 500. 100 captains had retired, but 60 new ones had been put into the list. He wanted to know, therefore, how the captain's list was to be reduced to 500?

Mr. WARD answered that the process would be very simple. It was intended to reduce the list to the number at which it was to be permanently kept by only having one promotion for every three deaths. He assured the hon. and gallant Member, that since the general promotion only one post-captain had been made by Lord Auckland, and that was Captain Denman, for services on the coast of Africa, to whom a promise had been made by the preceding Government. 180 captains having accepted the retirement sanctioned by the House last year, the list might have been reduced to 550; but on a general promotion 45 captains had been made, and the list was now 569, instead of 730, as it had formerly been.

Sir C. NAPIER only hoped that the rule of one promotion for three deaths would be stuck to. Seventeen years ago a promise of the same kind had been made, which had been entirely disregarded.

GALWAY ELECTION.

Mr. SMITH O'BRIEN begged leave to put a question to the noble Lord at the head of the Ministry respecting the threats to the tenants of the Marquess of Clanricarde, Postmaster General, if they did not vote for the Government candidate at the last election for the borough of Galway. Having read a brief extract from an Irish newspaper upon the subject, the hon. Member asked if it were with the sanction of the noble Lord that such coercion had been used to the tenants of the noble Marquess? He was sure that the noble Lord could have no difficulty in saying whether such coercion were authorized by himself or by any other Member of the Governmennt in order to procure the return of the Government candidate.

Lord J. RUSSELL: The hon. Gentleman has stated nothing specific; only generally, that coercion was used to the tenants of the Marquess of Clanricarde. I disbelieve it; and until some distinct evidence is produced I shall continue to disbelieve that such coercion has been used.

Mr. SMITH O'BRIEN admitted that he was not now in a condition to prove the fact; but if on farther inquiry he found that there was good reason to suppose that coercion had been used, he should move for a Select Committee to investigate the subject.

THE RUNDALE SYSTEM (IRELAND).

Viscount CLEMENTS asked whether Ministers intended to bring in any measure to alter what was called the rundale or joint-tenancy system in Ireland. No fewer than 1,902,547 acres were held upon this system of joint-tenancy in Ireland, and a Bill was necessary to put an end to the pernicious practice.

Lord J. RUSSELL answered that Ministers were about to introduce a Bill on the subject of the relation between landland and tenant in Ireland, but he could not undertake to say that it would touch the rundale system.

THE QUEEN'S LETTER (IRELAND).

Sir R. H. INGLIS was anxious distinctly to understand the Secretary for the Home Department on the subject of the distribution of the money which had been, and he hoped would be, collected for Ireland under the Queen's Letter. Through what channel would the money thus obtained be distributed? Much might depend upon the answer of the right hon. Baronet.

Sir GEORGE GREY: The same question was put to me a few evenings ago, and I then stated that Government thought that the best mode of distributing the subscriptions would be to place them at the disposal of the committee of the British Association for the Relief of Distress in Ireland, and in certain districts of Scotland. That committee possesses a high character and standing in the country, and they have published the details of the plans upon which they proceed in their distributions. A very large sum has already been disposed of by them, and they are acting in connexion with the Government. I think that the mode they adopt is most effectual in rendering the money available to the utmost extent.

DESTITUTE PERSONS (IRELAND) BILL.

Lord J. RUSSELL moved the Order of the Day for the House again to resolve itself into Committee on the Destitute Persons (Ireland) Bill.

Mr. O'CONNELL was understood to say, that in the first of the Irish Bills which had been submitted to the House—namely, the Indemnity Bill, he heartily and entirely agreed. Much had been said against the Labour-rate Act, but he thought unjustly. That Act had been of immense advantage in many baronies in Ireland, especially in the west, and many of the works effected under it had been exceedingly useful. It had not been of so much use in other parts of Ireland, he believed, where such public works were less wanted; but where they were necessary it had been very useful. The next Bill was the one for affording temporary assistance to the labouring poor. He could not say he entirely approved of that measure; but he should vote for it nevertheless, as he was ready to support any Bill which would afford one additional means of relief in the present calamity. The next Bill was one for the relief of the destitute poor in Ireland. He was afraid the House was not sufficiently aware of the extent of the misery; he did not think the Members were sufficiently impressed with the horrors of the situation of the people of Ireland; he did not think they understood the miseries—the accumulation of miseries—under which the people were at present suffering. It had been estimated that 5,000 adults and 10,000 children had already perished from famine; and that 25 per cent of the whole population would perish unless the House should afford effective relief. They would perish of famine and disease unless the House did something speedy and efficacious — not doled out in small sums—not in private and individual subscriptions, but by some great act of national generosity, calculated upon a broad and liberal scale. If this course were not pursued, Parliament was responsible for the loss of 25 per cent of the population of Ireland. He assured the House most solemnly that he was not exaggerating; he could establish all he said by many and many painful proofs, and the necessary result must be typhus fever, which in fact had broken out, and was desolating whole districts. It left alive only one in ten of those it attacked. This fearful disorder ere long would spread to the upper classes; the inhabitants of England would not escape its visitations, for it would be brought over by the miserable wretches who escaped from the other side of the Channel. The calamity would be scattered over the whole empire, and no man would be safe from it. He repeated that two millions of human beings would be destroyed, if relief were not speedily and effectually afforded. It had been asked why the rich Irish did not relieve the poor? They had relieved them. It would be seen by the reports already before the House, that a large body of the Irish people were always on the verge of starvation. Another report, more recently made, had confirmed this statement, and established that in ordinary years great numbers were in destitution. But the destruction of the potato crop had occasioned a positive annihilation of food, and the people were starving in shoals, in hundreds—aye, in thousands and millions. Parliament was bound, then, to act not only liberally but generously—to find out the means of putting a stop to this terrible disaster. It was asserted that the Irish landlords did not do their duty. Several of them had done their duty—others had not; and considering the extraordinary exigency of the case, his plan was to arm Government with more real power, to apply to the purpose all the sums they deemed necessary. They ought instantly to carry out the mode of relief they thought necessary, responsible indeed to the House, but not fettered by the strict letter of the law. He wanted to see the House generously confiding in Ministers, let them be chosen from which side of the House they might. The facts, as he well knew, were more terrific than they had been yet stated—the necessity was more urgent. He had not said one word to produce irritation—he had not uttered one word of reproach—and without doing so, he called upon Parliament to appoint Commissioners to make inquiries in all parts of Ireland into the circumstances of those who were able to give—to specify and to name them, and to assess them for so much as they ought to contribute. A decisive measure of that sort should have his hearty support. Let every man's means be ascertained, and let the tribunal he would erect have the power of inflicting taxation. To inflict taxation without representation, had not been unusual in Ireland, and the grand-jury system was one of taxation without representation. The patience of the people of Ireland could not be too much admired. It had been exhibited on all occasions, and the forbearance of the lower orders, considering their almost intolerable privations, was wonderful. It was, however, possible that they might be driven from misery to madness; and, as to the levying of rates, it was at present impossible. As to the reimbursing of England for her advances, he contended that she would be no loser at the present crisis, any more than she had been on former occasions. He maintained that England had been a gainer by her loans to Ireland. He again assured the House that the lamentably destitute condition of the people, afflicted with poverty and visited by disease, was insupportable; and he called upon Parliament to interpose generously, munificently—he would say enormously—for the rescue of his country. Recollect how incumbered was the property of Ireland; how many of her estates were in Chancery, how many were in the hands of trustees. She was in their hands—in their power. If they did not save her, she could not save herself. He solemnly called on them to recollect that he predicted with the sincerest conviction, that one-fourth of her population would perish unless Parliament came to their relief.

SIR. B. HALL thought, that when Her Majesty's Ministers came forward and proposed that they should advance large sums of money by way of loan for the relief of distress in Ireland, the House ought not to forget the existence of distress in this country. In the parish of St. Pancras alone, out of a population of 130,000, 8,000 were, at present, receiving outdoor relief, and 2,000 in-door relief. The deaths, also, within the bills of mortality had greatly increased of late. He did not wish to say anything offensive to the Irish landlords; but when those Gentlemen came to that House and said, " Our people are in great misery, distress, and destitution; famine is stalking through the provinces, and carrying off hundreds and thousands, and we hold the Legislature responsible for this state of things;" he (Sir B. Hall) must say, that he thought a fearful responsibility rested on those landlords themselves. They came forward with the statement that there was severe distress, that famine prevailed in the country, that death was stalking through the provinces; but the responsibility for that state of things rested on them. They anticipated the failure of the potato crop, but had not made proper provision for the consequences resulting from it. The responsibility did not rest on the English, but on the Irish landlords. He saw by the report lately presented to the House, that in a large union in the county of Mayo, Mr. Otway said the rates were not paid; and that gentleman added, that in such a case " it was unjust and absurd to call on the Government to make loans for the support of the workhouse." Now, here was a gentleman officially employed, and worthy of every credit, who stated that there were people living in such unions who were capable of paying rates, and who refused to pay them. And when it was said the consequences of such refusal rested with the English people, he insisted that it did not rest on them, but on the Irish landlords. Suppose one of the guardians in the Principality, where he resided—suppose he were himself—to refuse to pay his rates, and that he could not go out of his own demesne without meeting unfortunate beings living in hovels in which no one with any kindness in his nature could consent to place his dogs; what, in such a case, would be said of him? Why, he should be an object of scorn and execration to every man in the country. Let it not be supposed that he was for refusing all assistance to the Irish people. If the people of England could make up their minds that those who had the best interests in Irish prosperity had spared neither thought, nor time, nor industry, nor pecuniary means, in making the resources of the country available for the support of their fellow-countrymen—if he could believe that everything had been done by the Irish landlords to develop the resources of the country—he said for himself, and he might add, he thought, for every member of the United Kingdom, they should be ready heartily to come forward in such a case to supply any means that were found wanting to help them out of their distress. The case of Ireland was quite different from this; and when he was informed that there were people of large property who had not paid their rates, he must say such persons ought to be held up to public indignation. In Castlebar there were gentlemen of large property who had refused to pay their rates; and here he would say one word on that most wretched district in Ireland, of which they had all heard so much—he meant Skibbereen. More wretchedness was found there than in any other part of Ireland, and there too rates were not paid. If any gentleman would look into the larger of the blue books which had been presented, he would see that Sir R. Routh stated that in Skibbereen the rental was 93,000*l.* a year; and that in the immediate neighbourhood the rental was 50,000*l.* a year. Sir R. Routh gave the names. He stated there was one property, belonging to Lord Carbery, of 15,000*l.* a year, another property of 10,000*l.*, and another of 4,000*l.*, with several of 1,000*l.* a year. Sir R. Routh accompanied this account with a question which he should like to hear answered by some Irish Member, "With such resources as these, ought such destitution to exist?" He must say he thought the real foundation of such misery as existed in that district was the conduct of the Irish landlords. There was no use in saying they were not responsible for their conduct; they were responsible, and ought to be made to feel their responsibility. He was extremely glad to hear the hon. and learned Member for Cork give in his adhesion to the Poor Law Bill proposed by the Government, for he must confess he feared that much opposition would be given to it by the Irish Members. The sentiments of the hon. and learned Gentleman must be considered most important on this head, for he was the organ of the feelings and opinions of the great mass of the people of Ireland. He saw, however, a report of a meeting of Irish Members and Peers, held on Saturday, at which Lord Monteagle presided. It was stated that one of the resolutions passed at that meeting condemned, in the strongest terms, that clause of the new Poor Law in which temporary relief was directed to be given at the expense of the union. Now, he should be glad to know at whose expense was it right it should be given. It was useless to quibble on the subject: laws must be passed to compel the Irish landlords who could afford it to maintain the poor of Ireland. Another resolution was passed at the same meeting condemning the clause in the Bill which authorized the granting of out-door relief to able-bodied paupers. It was evident that the Irish landlords did not approve of a permanent poor law for their country; but that was the very thing which the people of England wanted them to have, and which the Parliament must make them have. The other night, when the hon. Member for Dundalk intimated that the Irish landlords had no great desire to relieve able-bodied paupers, the hon. Member for Montrose very properly asked—" Who is to support them; are we?" That was a question which the people of England were asking of each other. It was bad enough to see the aged and infirm obliged to make application for relief; but the most pitiable object in God's creation was to see an able-bodied man willing to work, but unable to obtain employment. One of the greatest benefits which legislation could confer upon the country would be the enactment of a law to compel Irish proprietors to support their able-bodied poor, for he believed that as soon as they found themselves under that obligation they would give the labourers work. An hon. Baronet who represented a Scotch constituency had informed him that two or three weeks ago 230 persons were receiving relief in the part of the district which he represented, and that only six of those persons were Scotch, the rest being Irish. That was an extraordinary state of things. The people of this country did not refuse to extend relief to their distressed Irish brethren; but it was unjust in the Irish landlords to drive their people into this country, instead of endeavouring to maintain them. It would be a matter of regret to him, if, in the course of the observations he had made, anything had fallen from him which was offensive to the Irish Members; but, as the representative of one of the largest constituencies in the empire, which, as he had stated at the outset, was at present suffering deep distress, he had felt it his duty to express, not only his own feelings, but the feelings of those who sent him to that House. He did not wish to stint the Irish poor; on the contrary, he would gladly join in assisting them with loans, or even with grants of money, if he thought there were not resources in Ireland which ought to be applied to the support of the destitute people of that country, but which were at present perverted from that object. The people of England would afford all necessary assistance to their Irish fellow-subjects; but it must be clearly understood that the responsibility of the present state of Ireland was not to be thrown upon this country; it rested upon the shoulders of those who had an immediate interest in the soil of Ireland.

Mr. M. MILNES said, if he wanted any confirmation of the remark of the hon. and learned Member for Cork, that that House did not appear to take in the whole extent of the present state of Irish distress, he should find it in the speech of the hon. Baronet the Member for Marylebone; for valuable as were some of the hon. Member's remarks, and true, and over true, as many of his assertions in regard to the landlords in Ireland were, he could not think that the hon. Baronet fully comprehended what the state of Ireland was, when he said he should not wish to stint the Irish poor. This was no case of stinting, it was a case of starving. There was no case whatever to compare chronic English distress with chronic Irish distress. It was a case in which the English Parliament and nation had cause to intervene in one of the most singular calamities that had ever befallen any country during the last three centuries, and for which it was in vain to draw arguments and conclusions from the ordinary course of measures. He might presume to speak of the state of the country more readily than others, inasmuch as he had himself, with his own eyes, witnessed it in certain parts of the country. He said certain parts, because it should be borne in mind that the distress was not spread over the whole surface of the country, but was confined to certain districts. The remedy, therefore, should not be general, but partial in its operation. He should recommend the most careful consideration with regard to the introduction of the English poor law. On the right solution of that question, the future prosperity or adversity of the Irish people would depend. He prayed them, then, to consider that the present state of that country was one of a peculiar and pressing nature. The hon. and learned Gentleman said, that it could not be doubted that twenty-five per cent of the population were being swept away by famine and pestilence. Now, he did not wish to make a comparison of things that could not be compared; but if a pauper died of starvation in the streets of London, the public press would take the matter up, leading articles would be written upon it, and the case would be put forth in the strongest manner to excite public sympathy and awaken public horror. Was the mere distance between London and Skibbereen—the fact that the Irish Channel and about 200 miles of land interposed between the two places—to make them forget that the Irishman who called out for relief, was just as much their fellow-countryman, as much bound to them by sympathy and nationality, as the poor pauper who might die in the streets of London? It was perfectly true the Irish landlords had not habitually done their duty; but was the misconduct of the landlands to be visited on the paupers of Irelands? Because Sir W. Beecher had not contributed as much as he ought to the support of the poor in Skibbereen, were they to be allowed to perish to an extent that would not be allowed in any city of France or Germany? He must take the liberty of saying, that this was not a time for bringing forward such exceptional cases as those referred to by the right hon. Baronet. It might be there were workhouses in the union, for supporting which no rate had been paid; but let the hon. Gentleman compare the number of those cases with those of unions where the workhouses were groaning with the load of misery and pestilence which now threatened to overwhelm them. It was the same thing as to the abuses of the Labour-rate Act. Some farmers of twelve or fourteen acres might be employed on the works; but the only difference between them and the others was, that they were on the brink of famine, and the others over it. In the same way he must say of the speeches of the hon. and learned Member for Bath, this Session, though many of them were able, it was not decent on such an occasion to objurgate the landlords and people of Ireland. Great misery was ever sacred in the eyes of honourable men, and it was not fair to treat the calamity which had befallen Ireland in the way in which the hon. and learned Gentleman had done. He had to apologize for taking up so much of their time; for he declared every moment that these measures were delayed, an injury was done to the people of Ireland. He must say, in conclusion, that he thought he expressed the sentiments of all generous and good Englishmen, when he protested against having such exceptional cases as those alluded to by the hon. Baronet taken as a true picture of the conduct of the landlords throughout Ireland.

MR. P. SCROPE said, that he did not understand the hon. Member for Marylebone to argue that the Government should not interpose between the Irish people and destitution. All the hon. Member had urged was this, that the people of England were already more heavily taxed than the Irish, and that before fresh burdens were imposed upon them for the relief of the Irish, it was necessary to ascertain whether property in Ireland had discharged its duties. That was not urged with the view of objurgating the Irish landlords, but to ascertain whether they might be depended upon for the discharge of their duty; and if not, it would be incumbent on the Legislature to establish a compulsory system of relief in Ireland, and thus secure the English people against being periodically called upon to maintain their Irish brethren, either by loans or gifts, to be made good by additional taxation upon themselves. That he understood to be the tenor of the hon. Member for Marylebone's argument, and he perfectly concurred in it. The people of England were regarding the proceedings in that House with great interest; and they would not be content to have laws passed for advancing large sums of money to Ireland, unless security should be taken that, for the future at least, the property of Ireland should be made to maintain the poor of that country. The rental of Ireland was estimated at 13,000,000*l.* in the poor-rate returns; and Mr. Griffith had declared that that was very much below the letting rental. It might, therefore, fairly be concluded that the actual rental of Ireland was 15,000,000*l*, The exports of Ireland amounted to 17,000,000*l.*, the greater part of which were food. In addition to these things, no one disputed that the resources of Ireland were enormous, and, indeed, that the country was capable, if the landlords would set about the work of improvement with energy, of maintaining three or four times the present amount of population. It appeared to him that the hon. Member for Cork had, in the course of his short address, unjustly referred the misery of Ireland to the Union. If, during the last fifteen years, the hon. Member had advocated the necessity of taxing the property of Ireland for the maintenance of the poor, he would have done much practical good to his country; but, instead of that, the hon. Member made it a matter of boast, a few years since, that he had stood in the gap to prevent the introduction of a poor law into Ireland, and, instead of wishing to make the landlords responsible for the maintenance of the poor, he endeavoured to support the repeal of the Union, by telling them that, if they did not join him, the jealousy of England would compel them to pay a poor rate! It was his firm opinion, that if some provision for the permanent maintenance of the Irish poor by Irish property should not be introduced into one of the measures before the House, there would be no security against peculation and gross partiality in the distribution of the funds.

VISCOUNT DUNCAN said, that he had been requested by the chief magistrate of the city which he represented to confirm the statement made by his hon. Colleague on a former evening, upon which the hon. Member for Pontefract seemed to be inclined to throw some doubt; namely, that his constituents were in the lowest state of distress. Notwithstanding their distresses, they would manfully do their duty, and would not permit a fellow-countryman to die unrelieved at their doors, and they called upon the Government to see that those who possessed property in Ireland did all in their power to alleviate the distress which under Divine Providence had visited that country. He hoped some Irish Member would be able to rise in his place, and deny the statements contained in the blue book which had been laid upon the Table of the House. For his part, he thought some of the statements contained in that volume were of the most appalling character. He requested the attention of the House to an extract from the observations of the medical officers on the neglect to which the inmates of Castlebar workhouse were exposed:—

> "On the 19th of December, the sick in hospital for whom bread was prescribed got no food from five o'clock the previous day to seven o'clock this evening.
>
> "No. 367. Anthony Leonard, aged 31 years, had paralytic affections for ten years before admission into the workhouse; was then very infirm; got diarrhœa on the 15th of November, of which he was cured, but died of exhaustion on the 23rd of December, 1846.
>
> "No. 769. James Lyons, aged 72 years, died of diarrhœa and infirmity on the 20th of December, 1846.
>
> "For the week ending January 2, 1846.—On the 27th of December the sick in hospital did not get the diet prescribed for them; on the 28th of December, the sick in hospital did not get the bread prescribed for them; on the 29th of December the sick in hospital did not get the diet prescribed for them; on the 30th of December the sick in hospital did not get the diet prescribed for them; on the 31st of December the sick in hospital did not get the diet prescribed for them; on the 1st of January, 1847, the sick in hospital got no food till after ten o'clock; on yesterday, the 1st of January, the sick in hospital, as well as the other inmates of the workhouse, got but one meal; and on this day, the 2nd of January, they have got no food up to this hour (twelve o'clock).
>
> "For the week ending Jan. 9, 1847.—On the 4th of January the sick in hospital, as well as the other inmates of the house, have not got breakfast up to this hour (half-past 3 o'clock); on the 5th of January the sick in hospital did not get the bread prescribed for them; on the 6th of January the sick in hospital did not get the bread prescribed for them; on the 7th of January the sick in hospital did not get the bread prescribed for them; on the 8th of January the sick in hospital did not get the bread prescribed for them; on the 9th of January the sick in hospital did not get the bread prescribed for them."

It was also said in this report, that in many cases the payment of rates had been refused, and that such names as those of Lord Lucan, Sir Wm. Beecher, Sir S. O'Malley, and Lord Kilmaine, were found amongst those who had not paid the rates to which they were liable. Mr. Otway, the Poor Law Commissioner, expressly stated that there was more difficulty in getting the rates from the better class of landholders than from the poor ratepayer. Now, that was far different from the conduct of landlords in this country. In the northern part of the kingdom, at least, they had done their duty, and in the vicinity of Paisley, where they were paying a rate of 3*s.* in the pound, they had in addition got up a subscription of 100*l.* a year for the poor. He trusted the gentlemen of Ireland would feel the necessity of having their rates paid up, and would come forward and repudiate the cases alluded to, which were, he trusted, exceptions to the general rule. If they did so, he was convinced his countrymen and constituents, though they paid many taxes from which Ireland was exempt, would willingly assist her in the moment of distress; but he trusted they would not be asked to contribute more than they could. With respect to the accusations against Irish landlords, he begged to call the attention of the hon. Members for the county Clare to what had been said of them. He saw they had been accused of putting tenants of theirs, who were paying 60*l.* a year rent, on the public works to the exclusion of others. He trusted those hon. Members would be anxious and able to clear themselves of those charges.

Major MACNAMARA: Sir, as a Member for Clare, I pledge my honour to this House that every sentence stated in Mr. or Captain Wynne's correspondence is a malicious falsehood. There is not one penny of rate due in that part of the county Clare in which I reside.

Mr. BERNAL OSBORNE said, he was unwilling to continue the discussion, and if he rose to say a few words, it was because he felt surprised that hon. Gentlemen connected with land in Ireland had not thought proper to say something in defence of themselves, and in reply to the remarks of the hon. Baronet (Sir B. Hall), and of the noble Lord the Member for Bath (Lord Duncan). He had no disposition to say anything with respect to the question raised by the hon. Member for Stroud (Mr. P. Scrope); this, however, he would say, that the poor law might be good or might be bad, but that he could not think that hon. Member justified in getting up a discussion on it on every subject which was started in the House. He thought when the hon. Baronet the Member for Marylebone (Sir B. Hall) came forward and lectured the Irish landlords in the strain of the daily papers, for the better part of his speech was taken from the *Times* of last week—and when he quoted the cases of the Ballina and Castlebar unions, which were the stock in trade of orators of his description, just as the Keighley union was the stock in trade of an hon. Member near him—he ought to make himself acquainted with the facts. Now he (Mr. B. Osborne) would make bold to say, that as a body, the Irish landlords (who were not represented in that House—and he might again express his surprise, that none of those who did sit there had risen to defend themselves) had done and were doing their duty in their particular unions and districts. The hon. Baronet had no right to infer, from the cases of neglect he had quoted, that it was the rule in Ireland. He could tell the right hon. Baronet—he begged pardon—the hon. Baronet (and he was glad, indeed, that he was not right hon. and was not speaking the sentiments of Government), that there were cases in which the boards of guardians had hired houses for the poor, and were supporting 2,000 paupers, where the workhouses had been built for 600 only. The hon. Baronet and the noble Lord had thought fit to deal in aspersions on Sir W. Beecher and Lord Lucan, to whom it would have been at least fair to have given notice of their intention; but had the hon. Member and the noble Lord read the whole of the blue book? [Viscount Duncan: I have read the whole of it.] Was he aware that in a letter dated January 26, 1847, Lord Lucan positively denied those statements respecting his conduct? Lord Lucan says—

> "I am unprepared positively to contradict Mr. Otway, when he states that two-thirds of the arrears are owing by immediate lessors, amongst whom he names Sir S. O'Malley, Mr. Kearny, and myself."

Let hon. Gentlemen listen to what follows:

> "But I totally disbelieve that they are really due by any of us."

He had no acquaintance with the noble Lord who wrote that letter, but he knew from his own experience that the rate-books were often fraudulent. Moreover, the noble Lord stated in that very letter that he had been keeping the workhouse open at his own expense for three months; and Lord Sligo, to whom a similar reference had also been made in that House, was doing the same at Westport, and was supplying funds out of his own pocket for the workhouse. He most positively asserted that Ballinrobe, Ballina, and Castlebar, were the exceptions, and not the rule; and he moreover asserted that if Irish landlords had neglected their duty, their conduct was the result of the legislation of that House, in treating Ireland as an English colony. There was one hon. Gentleman in that House, the hon. Member for Paisley, who was in the habit of objurgating in private the Irish landlords. He dared that hon. Gentleman to stand up in his place in that House, and do it. He did not go to the length of saying that the Union had created this state of things; but he maintained that if they had legislated for Ireland in a different spirit, they would not now have those complaints to make of the Irish landlords. He called on the Irish Members not to sit still under the aspersions which had been thrown out broadcast against them, but to stand up in their places and say that they had been and were now doing their duty.

Mr. HASTIE said, he hoped it never would be a charge against him, that he was in the habit of saying in private what he would not repeat in public; and if the hon. Member could bring a charge of any private conversation against him, he would be ready to defend himself. With respect to such conversations, all he could say was, that he had stated nothing in reference to the conduct of the Irish landlords which had not appeared in the books before the House. Any one reading those books, and seeing the accounts given by honourable men—the officers of the Government—of the obstructions which they met with, and of the neglect of the landlords, could not help stating that the Irish landlords had, as a body, neglected, grossly neglected, their duty to the poor of the country. That he had stated privately, and in the hearing of the hon. Member for Wycombe; and he was glad of that opportunity of stating in public what he felt to be true from the evidence before the House. He wished before he sat down to make a slight comparison between the duties of the Irish landlord, landholder, and farmer, under the circumstances in which the country was placed, and between their actual conduct. They must have been fully aware, that a large failure of the potato crop was about to take place; but instead of forming themselves into committees for the purpose of ascertaining the extent of the failure, the number of inhabitants in each parish who would be left destitute—instead of ascertaining what food there was in each parish, and the quantity of wheat, oats, and meal which would be required to feed the people, and of informing the Government of these facts—what had they done? None of these things. They had done nothing but sit down and howl for English money. It was on account of this conduct, and for the want of method, arrangement, and honesty of purpose, that he said they alone were responsible for the evils that had taken place. He had further to state that the landlords of Ireland ought, in order to place themselves on a footing with the landlords of England and Scotland, to subscribe the same proportion to the support of the poor. The rental of Ireland should be taxed for that purpose to the same extent as that of Great Britain, and at least 1,500,000*l.* or 1,800,000*l.* should be raised from the landlords of Ireland. From the poor-law returns and other authentic documents as to the value of property in Ireland, it appeared that the rental assessable to the support of the poor could not be less than 15,000,000*l.* a year. In England the rental was taxed 10 per cent for the poor rates. When, therefore, the Irish landlords raised 1,500,000*l.*, and thus placed themselves on an equality with this country, they had a right to come to this country and ask for their assistance, but not till then; and if, as a body, the Irish landlords would rise in that House and faithfully say, that whatever money was advanced they would do their best to repay, and would give such security as they could, he did not believe there was a single man in it would vote against such assistance being granted to them.

Sir D. NORREYS said, he thought it due to Sir W. Beecher to state, that within the last six weeks or two months the thanks of the relief committee of his district had been given to him for his conduct. As far as the general remarks of the hon. Member for Marylebone were concerned, he could not help thinking that he was pandering to a very vicious feeling prevalent in this country. He had taken great pains to make out his statement of neglect; but had he done so honestly? The hon. Member had taken the cases of four unions in Ireland. Did he know how many there were in that country? There were 136 unions in Ireland. Had the hon. Member ascertained whether in nine out of ten the workhouses were not overflowing? In the south, at least, every possible effort had been made by the landlords to relieve the poor; and the guardians were willing to extend the provisions of the Act, and give out-door relief, when the Poor Law Commissioners stepped in and prevented them. He felt confident that as much exertion had been put forth by the Irish landlords as could have been expected under the panic of the times; and it must be recollected that the landlords were themselves the sufferers by the failure of the potato. The loss, which had been estimated at 15,000,000*l.*, must and would react on the landlords. With respect to the observations of the hon. Member for Paisley, he must say he believed the Irish landlords had adopted the course he had suggested, and that it had been on their representations Government brought forward the Labour-rate Act last Session. Whatever the Irish landlords were, it was that House had made them so. He was as much opposed to repeal as any man; but he believed that Ireland would now be in a far different position but for the selfish legislation of this country.

Sir H. W. BARRON agreed with his hon. Friend who had just spoken, in all his observations with respect to the conduct of the landlords and guardians in his (Sir W. Barron's) county. He could firmly assert that the rates had been paid in every case. It was, then, disgraceful for men who knew nothing of the subject, to bring forward the most mendacious charges against the unions and boards of guardians of Ireland. Out of 136, they could only find four that had apparently neglected their duty. He thought that the hon. Baronet had acted most uncandidly in reading a document, as if it were a resolution of the noblemen, gentlemen, and Members of Parliament, who met on Friday last in Palace-yard. What would hon. Gentlemen think when he told them that this document, which was read by the hon. Baronet as if it were a resolution of the meeting, was taken from the *John Bull* newspaper, which had no reporter there! It was a most unfair, indecent, and mendacious report. The hon. Baronet (whom he believed incapable of wilful misrepresentation) should have informed the House that it was not the resolution of that body. He did not charge the hon. Baronet with making use of what was false; but what were the facts of the case? The hon. Baronet stated that the resolution had been proposed with the concurrence of Lord Monteagle, and that it was to the effect that the able-bodied poor should not be supported by the unions. It was a pity that some gentlemen would talk of resolutions they knew nothing about. Let him explain how the case really was. In Ireland the poor were supported by the electoral divisions. The mere mendicants and wandering outcasts were supported by the unions at large. The Bill before the House meant that all these people were to be supported by the unions at large; and what the meeting wanted was, that the out-door relief of these people should be charged to the electoral divisions, and not to the unions at large. That was the real meaning of it; but the hon. Baronet got a cheer by saying, that the resolution was to the effect that the unions should not maintain the poor. If the hon. Member for Paisley knew anything of Ireland—and he knew nothing of it—he would have been aware that the Irish landlords had taken the very course he had suggested. But these statements answered a purpose. The fact was, that some English capitalists wanted an opportunity of putting their money into Irish estates. He could trace the whole outcry against the Irish landlords to a low cunning, and to a disgraceful feeling, to crush people in order to make money of them, and to force them to sell their estates, that others might buy them. He believed that feeling was at the bottom of this outcry, and from the organs which had raised it, he was the more persuaded of its truth. Now he would tell the House and the country that the Irish Members took it as their right, so long as they were a portion of the British empire, to come to that House and ask of them, as representatives of the great British people, in a voice that could not be misunderstood, to do their duty, and protect Ireland as they would protect Yorkshire or Scotland. If they were not to be considered as aliens, they had a clear right to protection. Was not the British Exchequer the Irish Exchequer? Were not Government the Ministers of Ireland as well as of Great Britain? Let him not bear the taunt about English capital, English money, and English taxes. Did not Ireland pay customs, excise, and taxes, as well as England? Nay more, he believed that if inquiry were made, it would be found that Ireland was overtaxed in proportion to the other countries. He hoped Parliament had honesty enough not to be led away by such accusations against the landlords of Ireland, who had done their duty in the most exemplary manner. There might be some exceptions; but it happened that in two out of four cases of neglect, the persons accused of it were supporting the poor people at their own expense. With respect to the charge against Lord Lucan, that he had not paid his taxes, he would explain that, according to the system in Ireland, the landlord was accountable for the taxes of tenants rated under 4*l.* a year. Such was the irregularity of the books, however, that where there was a vast number of small tenants, as in Mayo, it often occurred that the landlord was charged with the taxes due by the tenant or middleman. Similar cases had occurred to himself, where he had been applied to for his tenants' taxes. But for Lord Lucan the workhouse of Castlebar would have been shut up, for it was impossible to collect the rate: many of the small farmers had not one shilling of money, and were obliged to purchase necessaries on credit at an exorbitant rate, so that it was impossible for them to pay any rates whatever. They had neither money nor credit, and some people expected the rate to be paid as if it were in Middlesex or Marylebone. As to the statement of the hon. Baronet respecting Sir W. Beecher, it was perfectly notorious that a better resident landlord, or a more excellent and charitable gentleman than he was, could not be found; and that was the man who was held up as deserving the execration of the House. If those mendacious attacks were made, and if the Irish landlords were vilified in this way, the natural consequence would be that the charity of the benevolent people of this country would be closed up. They shrank with horror from the contemplation of such heartless men, and said they would leave them to themselves; and so far from Gentlemen being right in making such statements, they were deserting their duty to the people of England, and raking up animosity and rancour between the two countries.

Lord J. RUSSELL: Sir, I hope the House will not prevent me now from proposing to go into Committee with a view to relieve the distress of the Irish people, by a measure which, in the opinion of the Government, is best calculated to effect that object. I hope the House will not entirely forget what are the circumstances of the case at the present time. I do not wish to say anything more on this subject, especially as two or three hon. Members who are themselves Irish landlords have defended the conduct of that class; and it is useless to prolong the discussion. But my hon. Friend who has just sat down, not satisfied with defending the Irish landlords, thought fit to attack gentlemen who certainly are and ought to be very dear to me —my constituents in the city of London. It is on account of their being connected with the moneyed interest that these attacks are made; and it is said that there is much low cunning shown in wishing to get hold of the Irish landlords' estates by that moneyed interest. I do not think that any general statements on this subject carry much weight; but I may tell my hon. Friend that about a month ago some dozen gentlemen connected with the city of London, having no connexion with Ireland, no property in Ireland, and, I believe, not wishing to have any there, but only carrying on their business in this metropolis, met in order to raise subscriptions, and made subscriptions, several of them to the amount of a thousand pounds, and other large sums. Not satisfied with doing this, but occupied as they are every morning, from an early hour till four o'clock in the afternoon, they went every afternoon, after their business was over, for the purpose of receiving subscriptions and attending to the correspondence, in order to transmit the funds thus subscribed, in the manner most safe and efficient. With respect to the public funds and the Exchequer, which my hon. Friend likewise calls upon us to draw upon, I will beg him to recollect, that whether the sums have been wisely awarded, whether the act was a wise one, and whether it has been properly administered or not, there is this fact to be noticed, that within the last month I believe not less than a million of money has gone from the Imperial Exchequer for the purpose of relieving Irish distress. And since Parliament has met, though I have heard much discussion, I have not heard any one deny that in a great calamity, such as is at present existing in Ireland, whatever mode may be best for its relief, yet it is not an extravagant use of the money of the Imperial Exchequer to devote that money to a very large amount to the relief of distress. I believe, when the whole accounts come to be presented to the House, it will be shown, though that calamity has been unprecedented and appalling, the sums granted and advanced by the public for the purpose of relieving that distress are likewise unprecedented; and that there will be no reason to complain of a want of sympathy towards the distressed. For my part, I wish to throw no blame on the Irish landlords. Much of their difficulty, I know, is an inevitable difficulty. I think in the present case the best part we can perform is to go into Committee for the purpose of relieving by this Bill all immediate distress. When the other questions come under consideration, whether for advancing money for the improvement of waste lands, or for the poor law, this House will no doubt be ready to discuss them, and we shall see whether we can prevent recurrence of such calamities pressing upon Ireland for the future.

MR. VILLIERS STUART wished, notwithstanding what had been said by the noble Lord, to denounce the charges which had been brought against the Irish landlords. He was one of that body, and he should consider that if they were guilty of the charges brought against them, they would be unworthy of seats in that House. But those charges were far from being true; and he would venture to say that to any party who made the least inquiry into the matter, it would be evident that unjust or harsh landlords in Ireland were but exceptions to the rule. He himself had attended the meetings of the guardians of the poor of Kilkenny, and he could assure the House that the landlords of that district had exerted themselves in the most praiseworthy manner for the relief of the poor of their district; they willingly taxed themselves for the relief of their distressed neighbours. During the last month 100*l.* weekly had been received by the guardians in the shape of poor rates. He had no doubt that 1,000*l.* at least had been contributed by the landowners of the district in question for the relief of the poor. A fever hospital that had been erected there for the accommodation of eighty-five only, at present contained one hundred and sixty; in some cases there were four in one bed. Had the directors of the hospital been able to give relief to any more, they would have been glad to do so, as their great object was to mitigate, as far as possible, the sufferings of the people.

MR. S. CRAWFORD would be very sorry to detain the House from going into the Bill before them, but some observations had been made in the course of this debate, that he could not allow to pass altogether unnoticed. He felt deeply the position in which Ireland was placed at the present moment. They found the Government telling them that the people were starving, and they also found some hon. Members, who were Irish landlords, coming forward and saying that assistance should be given entirely by the Government to relieve the distress of the people. But he did not admit that the Government was liable to any such responsibility. He believed that rates ought to be levied on the land of Ireland for the purpose of supporting the poor of Ireland; and he also believed that there would be little difficulty connected with the enforcement of payment of those rates if the matter were properly taken up. As an English representative in that House, he did not feel that he was entitled to vote away the British money without being satisfied that such money would be repaid, for the property of Ireland could be made to pay it. He had a double duty to perform. He called for assistance for Ireland, and he asked the British people to give that assistance; but he would not call upon them to render any aid unless he was levied to the last farthing of his property for the purpose of repaying the sums that might be advanced. Under the present poor law in Ireland, the tenant was required, in the first instance, to pay all the rates assessed on his land, not only his own, but those assessed upon the landlord. But the landlord's rate ought to be separated from the tenant's, and the rates of the landlord ought to be levied from the landlord. He had that day week given notice of his intention to bring in a Bill for amending the law of rating in Ireland, and he was anxious that the hon. Members for Ireland should understand the object of that Bill. It was to provide that the landlord's share of the rate shall be separated from the tenant's rate in the rating book, and that the collectors of the rate should be compelled to recover the rates from each in a separate manner, and that the guardians of the poor in Ireland should be empowered to apply to the Court of Chancery to compel the payment of rates. Under such a law he had no doubt that all the rates would be paid. He thought that it was the duty of the House to show the British people that they were willing to compel the repayment of moneys advanced for the assistance of Ireland. Irish landlords got up in that House and charged the British Legislature with the ills of Ireland; but he believed that those ills were owing to the relation of landlord and tenant in that country. But at present he would refrain from entering upon that question, because he hoped to have an opportunity of doing so on a future occasion. When Irish landlords got up in that House, and threw all the responsibility of the wrongs of Ireland on the British Legislature, he was compelled, as a landed proprietor, to say, that if the British Legislature had acted wrongly towards Ireland, it had done so in this way—it had unduly favoured the landed proprietors of Ireland, and neglected the interests of the Irish people. He must admit that the body to which he belonged—the Irish landed proprietors—had been the most favoured class in the British dominions. The confiscated lands of Ireland had been given to them without any responsibility being imposed upon them for the natives of Ireland. They got all power, political as well as civil. They got all power that they asked for with respect to the collection of rents; they had got in fact every power which they asked from the Government of this country; and, therefore, if he blamed the Government at all, it was because of the unjust privileges which they had from time to time conferred upon the Irish landlords, to the ruin of the Irish people. He was perfectly convinced, however, that the Irish landlords were at present desirous of doing the utmost in their power to alleviate the sufferings of the people of Ireland; and he hoped that the British Parliament would not hesitate to make such advances as might be deemed necessary for the same object, taking care, at the same time, that security be had for the repayment of such loans.

VISCOUNT BERNARD begged leave to concur in the eulogiums which had been expressed in reference to the conduct of Sir William Beecher. He could assure the House that the assertions of the hon. Member for Marylebone were entirely groundless; and in fact the assertions which had been made as to the cruel and unfeeling conduct of the Irish landlords generally during the present calamity were shameful calumnies. The Irish landlords, as a body, were as high-minded as any men in the country; they were men of as high personal character, of as untarnished private and unblemished public honour as the landlords of England.

MR. RICE was prepared to give his support to this Bill; but he could not do so without saying that he thought the people of this country were justified in asking for ample security for the advances to be made under it. The Government was deserving of the greatest praise for the efforts which they had made, and the anxiety which they had evinced, for the relief of the distressed Irish people; but he was quite sure that the Members of Her Majesty's Government did not and could not shut their eyes to the disadvantages which must attend measures of this sort, unless ample security were given for the repayment of the advances that might be made at as early a period as they could be collected; and he therefore called upon them to propose strong and stringent measures, which would not only encourage but compel the Irish landlords to do their duty, and to provide for their own poor. He had no wish to throw any aspersions upon the Irish landlords, but he did wish to insist upon their being compelled to bear the burden of supporting their own poor. So far from desiring to "filch" the estates of the Irish landlords, he would rather assist them to bear their burdens. The people of this country would be satisfied with nothing short of the insertion of strong and stringent clauses in this Bill, for the purpose of compelling the landlords to do their duty to the poor upon their estates. He hoped that this Bill might pass without delay, as he believed that such a measure was absolutely necessary for the saving of the people of Ireland from starvation.

MR. J. O'BRIEN trusted he should be pardoned for expressing his surprise at the unwarrantable charges made in reference to the meeting at Ennistimon, founded on a record of the proceedings which imputed to the members of the committee conduct of which they were incapable. He had attended the meeting in question, and was at a loss to conceive what could have tempted any official person to commit himself by such extravagant assertions. There was some noisy discussion, and some discontent shown at the delay in making presentments; but he entirely denied that what was termed protection, which, in the ordinary acceptation of the word, involved the supposition of personal violence, was necessary.

Order of the day read. House in Committee on the Bill.

On Clause 12,

The CHANCELLOR OF THE EXCHEQUER, in reply to Mr. Smith O'Brien, said, that its object was to provide that in times of extraordinary pressure, such, for instance, as had occurred at Skibbereen, the charge of feeding the poor should fall on the whole of the electoral divisions of Ireland, because if the district in which such severity might happen were compelled to relieve the poor without the assistance of any other district, it would, to use a common expression, be "completely swamped."

COLONEL CONOLLY was most decidedly of opinion that this clause would lead to the greatest carelessness and lavish expenditure. From experience, he knew that to make each district support its own poor, was the most practical and economical plan.

Mr. F. FRENCH concurred in the observations of his hon. and gallant Friend who had just sat down, and when the question came to be discussed at a future period he would find him disposed to give him his support; but he thought that the fairest and the wisest course for the Irish Members to pursue with this temporary measure was to permit it to pass, and wait until the permanent one was proposed.

Mr. ROSS was also in favour of allowing this measure to pass as it was proposed for the temporary relief of the Irish people; but he did certainly hope that it would not be turned into a precedent. He was decidedly opposed to the merging of the electoral divisions, because he had seen the evil effects of such a system in his own neighbourhood.

Mr. WILLIAMS hoped that Her Majesty's Government would take care to provide for the repayment of the money to be advanced under this Bill, after the disclosures which had been made on Friday night by the noble Lord the Member for Lynn (Lord G. Bentinck), and the hon. Member for Northamptonshire, to whom he was quite sure that the people of this country would feel themselves very deeply indebted for the manly and honourable manner in which they came forward and expressed their convictions, founded, he had no doubt, upon as correct information and as much knowledge of the country as any gentleman connected with Ireland. He was quite aware that that part of Ireland to which the hon. Member for Rochdale (Mr. Crawford) belonged, would punctually repay every farthing of the money that might be advanced under this Bill; but such sum would be very insignificant as compared to the advances to be made to the other parts of the country which were in a more deplorable condition. He hoped that Her Majesty's Government, in justice to the hard-working people of this country, from whose industry and declining wages the taxes were to be taken from which this money would be supplied, would take care that the Irish landlords were made accountable for the repayment of the money. The Chancellor of the Exchequer had stated, in reply to him at the close of last Session, that only 3,000*l.* had been granted towards the relief of Ireland, and it was not expected that any more would be required for that purpose; but by the Bill before them the Government had, without the sanction of Parliament, expended in relieving the distress in Ireland 355,000*l.* He was not opposed to their affording assistance to Ireland; but he did insist upon the repayment of the money advanced to her. Although much had been said as to the harsh expressions of the hon. and learned Member for Bath (Mr. Roebuck), he was quite sure that that hon. Gentleman had expressed the universal opinion of the people of this country.

Mr. MORE O'FERRALL (interrupting): Sir, I wish to call your attention to a point of form. The hon. Member has addressed himself to the fourteenth clause; but at present that is not really the question under discussion, and it is quite out of order for him thus to waste the time of the House.

Mr. WILLIAMS was speaking in defence of his constituents. This Bill proposed to make large advances of money for the relief of Ireland; that money would come from the Exchequer, and he had a right to demand that they should be guaranteed repayment of those advances. He must express his astonishment at the hon. Member for Kildare interrupting him in the way that he had. He was speaking about the security to be given for the repayment of the proposed advances, and there was a securing clause in the Bill. The question was, whether the money was to be repaid by unions or electoral divisions. He had no desire to impede the proceedings of the Committee; and he thought that hon. Gentlemen from Ireland had no right to state that an English representative was wasting the time of the House, if he stood up in defence of the rights of his constituents.

Mr. STAFFORD O'BRIEN could easily forgive the ignorance displayed by the hon. Member for Coventry in respect to the relation between landlord and tenant in Ireland; but the hon. Member seemed to be equally ignorant of the very principles of the Bill they were then discussing. The hon. Member inflicted a long speech on the House without having read the Bill itself. The question now was, not between unions and electoral divisions, but as to the amount of discretion to be vested in the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland. His opinion was, that it was better to leave the poor law as it at present stood, and to omit the clause altogether. He must own that he was in favour of small territorial divisions, if for only one reason, that, by narrowing the circle, the responsibility of the landlord was increased. He preferred leaving the machinery of the existing poor law as it stood; and seeing the present clause interfered with it, he moved that it be altogether expunged from the Bill.

Mr. M. O'FERRALL said, if the present Bill were to be permanent, he would be disposed to agree with the hon. Member for Northamptonshire, and if such were the case, the powers which it proposed to vest in the Lord Lieutenant would be excessive, and ought alone to rest in the Crown; but as the Bill was only of a temporary character, designed to meet an exigency, and to expire with that exigency, and as the circumstances which called it forth were of a most extraordinary and unparalleled nature, he thought Parliament would act wisely in passing it into a law. In some parts of the south and west of Ireland, it was easy to suppose a case in which where the electoral division was small, the whole rental would be insufficient to meet the demands of pauperism. In such cases, were the proposition of the hon. Member for Northamptonshire adopted, there would be no alternative but to have recourse to the public treasury; and it would not be right to apply there until the whole means of Ireland were exhausted. Under these circumstances, therefore, he would recommend the hon. Gentleman to withdraw the Amendment.

Sir DENHAM NORREYS could not agree with the hon. Member for Northamptonshire, and thought it would be impossible to carry out the objects of the Bill, if the clause were to be expunged. The powers of the two bodies, the relief committees and the boards of guardians, were perfectly distinct. He would not now go into this matter at any length, and he trusted the Amendment would not be pressed to a division.

Sir J. GRAHAM said, he had studiously abstained from taking a part in this debate from the deep conviction that it was most important, in the present unfortunate circumstances of Ireland, that the measures for its relief should be carried through the House as speedily as possible; and that in order to accomplish this desirable object, no unnecessary topic should be introduced. But he felt that the point which they were now discussing was one of great importance, not only as regarded the present measure, but from its incidental bearings on a question still more important, namely, that permanent measure which would be hereafter brought under their notice. He would observe, in confirmation of what had fallen from an hon. Member who had preceded him, that the original Irish poor law had undergone several material changes since 1843, when he had the honour of introducing a provision in that measure which had for its object the assimilation of the law in that country, to the law of settlement in England; and on that occasion he was supported not only by a majority of the House, but by a majority of Irish Members. It was then provided that no person not occupying a tenement for twelve months out of eighteen, or not sleeping a certain time in a particular place, should be entitled to relief from the electoral district, but that relief should be given at the expense of the union at large. In his opinion it was necessary, both for the sake of perspicuity in arguing this question, and with a view to arrive at a speedy decision—it was necessary to maintain the distinction between permanent and temporary. Reserving for future discussion the question whether the burden of relief, under all circumstances—extended, with restrictions, to the able-bodied out of the workhouse—should fall on the union or on the electoral division, it was most desirable to confine the discussion to the nature and amount of relief to be afforded by the guardians of the poor, and by those whom that Bill was, for a temporary purpose, about to create. The Bill authorized the formation of certain committees, composed of persons who were to be nominated by the Lord Lieutenant to distribute relief; and the members of such committees were not controlled by the board of guardians nor by the Poor Law Commissioners. Such powers were, no doubt, novel and large; but the circumstances were likewise extraordinary, and the calamity extensive. But there was one question connected with this matter, upon which he would wish to be informed by a Member of the Government. It appeared, if he were not mistaken, that under the present system of electoral divisions, the burden of the poor rates fell in many instances, with almost overwhelming pressure, on certain small districts. This was especially the case in small and densely populated villages which were contiguous. If that had been so in former years, with what accumulated burden would these rates fall, upon such an occasion as the present! and if the rating were confined to a small electoral division, instead of being extended over the union at large, it would be oppressive in the extreme. Before sitting down, he would advert to another matter. 580,000 men were at present employed on public works exclusively. The money which paid them was advanced by Government, out of loans which were to be repaid by future levy. He thought it was most advisable that such advances for such a purpose ought to cease at once, for those 580,000 were, in point of fact, the tillers of the soil in Ireland. The period of the year ought to be considered. The season for sowing corn was somewhat later in Ireland than in this country; but yet the ground must be prepared as soon as possible for the spring sowing, which took place in March or April. They were now in the middle of February, and unless those 580,000 men resumed their accustomed agricultural occupations, he dreaded that the calamities of the present year were only the prelude to calamities still more awful. He hoped that if the measures of the Government were successful, the men now employed in public works would return to cultivate the soil, so that provision for an improved and an increased means of sustenance might be seasonably made. Considering that this was only a temporary measure, apart from the question of the poor law—remembering that its machinery was altogether different—he was disposed to adopt the opinions of the hon. Member for Kilkenny, to support the clause as it at present stood, and to resist the Motion of the hon. Member for Northamptonshire. He would at present give no opinion upon the permanent measure about to be brought in; and he begged to say that his observations in reference to electoral divisions and unions, and the preference of the latter for the purposes of rating, were entirely connected with the temporary character of the Bill now before the House.

MR. SHAW said, that under all the circumstances, he would recommend his hon. Friend (Mr. Stafford O'Brien) not to divide the House against the clause. He (Mr. Shaw) agreed with his hon. Friend in the principle of desiring the smaller territorial district to be charged with the rate; and in the discussion of the permanent Poor Relief Bill, he would to the utmost of his power assist his hon. Friend in giving effect to that principle; but seeing that the present Bill was only for the temporary relief of a great and pressing emergency—that the Government thought it important the power the clause conferred should be given —and that much must necessarily, in such a case, be left to the discretion of the Government—it was not worth raising the question upon that temporary Bill; and he (Mr. Shaw) thought doing so would prejudice the decision which he hoped would be come to in favour of the electoral division, in preference to the union rating, upon the consideration of the permanent Bill. Moreover, it was a great object to avoid delaying the passing of the measure. Irishmen, above all others, should not obstruct its progress; and it was that feeling alone which restrained him (Mr. Shaw) from rising during the preliminary discussion, before the Speaker left the chair, when the landlords of Ireland had been so unjustly, unfairly, and unfeelingly attacked by some English Members on the other side of the House, as had lately been too much the habit in that House. He only wished some of those Gentlemen could witness, as he had done for the last few months, the assiduity and devotion with which the landlords and the resident gentry of Ireland generally had applied themselves to the alleviation of the distress and suffering that surrounded them. He would not then impede the progress of the Bill by stopping to defend them; but on no fitting opportunity would he shrink from that duty.

MR. LABOUCHERE said, that with reference to what the right hon. Baronet opposite (Sir J. Graham) had stated, he must agree with him that in many of the electoral districts the amount of rateable property bore a very small proportion to the destitution in such such places. That was the case even with regard to unions; and he agreed with the right hon. Baronet that the only remedy was to spread the taxation over a larger surface. He would not now protract the present discussion, as it was most desirable it should be brought to a speedy termination, but would observe, that no hon. Member, by voting in support of the present clause, in any way pledged himself to any future measure in reference to this subject.

MR. SMITH O'BRIEN would support the Amendment if it were pushed to a division.

SIR W. VERNER had received several letters from Irish ratepayers requesting him to oppose the clause, on the ground that it would bring ruin upon them in its operation.

MR. DILLON BROWNE supported the clause, because, if the smaller divisions were adopted, the rates would press with intolerable severity on the ratepayers residing in these narrow electoral districts.

Sir R. FERGUSON hoped the hon. Member for Northamptonshire would withdraw his opposition; but he gave the Government notice that, if advances were to be made, they ought not to be made on the union at large, for in such cases there would be great difficulty in collecting them.

Amendment withdrawn.

Lord J. MANNERS wished to know whether the Government had considered the effect which this rating clause would have upon the subscriptions that were now raised throughout Ireland, and upon the efforts that were made by the Irish landlords to employ the poor that were resident on their own estates. They were bound to take care that they did nothing which would in any way impede the performance of those private duties which they had a right to expect from the Irish landlords; and he feared that the practical tendency of this clause would be to throw such impediments in their way.

Mr. LABOUCHERE said, he did not conceive this clause would have any effect such as the noble Lord had described.

Mr. B. OSBORNE entirely agreed with the noble Lord that the effect of this clause would be to stop the subscriptions that were now raised throughout Ireland, and to render the Irish landlords entirely apathetic. He regretted that the hon. Member for North Northamptonshire had agreed to withdraw his Amendment, as every hon. Gentleman who spoke was in favour of its principle.

Clause agreed to.

Clauses 13 to 15 were agreed to.

On Clause 16,

Mr. G. A. HAMILTON took that opportunity to express in public what he had formerly said in private. When forming one of a deputation to Government on the subject of relieving Irish distress, he said that there would be no indisposition on the part of Irish landlords to repay, and that promptly, the sums that might be advanced by the Government for the relief of the existing distress. As one step towards this, he begged to suggest that words should be inserted in this clause allowing the relief committees to require payment of such advances by instalments, as he understood the clause in its present state.

The CHANCELLOR of the EXCHEQUER was exceedingly glad to hear from the hon. Gentleman in his place in Parliament what he had before stated as a member of a deputation, that there was no unwillingness to allow the property of Ireland to be taxed for the present distress. With reference to the suggestion made by the hon. Gentleman, he had to state, that it was proposed to raise the sum required by subscription; and if the subscriptions did not come up to the full amount required, the deficiency was to be made up by a rate, and it would be for the amount of that deficiency that the rated districts would be liable.

Viscount CLEMENTS was astonished at hon. Gentlemen speaking of these moneys being repaid. "You may," said the noble Lord—

"You may call spirits from the vasty deep,
But will they come when you do call upon them?"

He could not, as an honest man, sit still and hear that Irish property was to be pledged for the repayment of these loans; for he held that that was utterly and physically impossible. For himself, he was ready to toil—he was ready to labour—he was ready to do anything that the Government wished him; but he was not ready to repay those loans. If they must repay them, Government must give them the means. Do not let them misunderstand him: he was not one of those who asked for money; but he insisted that they should have legislative means of repayment—by the landlords being invested with power over their own estates, which at the present time, in too many instances, they had not.

Mr. ROEBUCK said, they were now arrived at a stage in which he had a right to call upon Her Majesty's Government to deal with the House of Commons in the way in which the House of Commons was accustomed to be dealt with. Hitherto they had been disposing of the means by which they were to apportion the relief that was about to be granted; but they had not yet come to the relief itself. They were now approaching that most important of all subjects—the subject of money, and he was, therefore, justified in calling upon the Chancellor of the Exchequer to give some explicit explanation of what they were about to do. For it must be evident to everybody that hitherto they had been acting totally in the dark. They were told they were to do something; but what that something was they did not know. Now, he would put a question to the Chancellor of the Exchequer, and he hoped, for the honour of the Ministry, that the right hon.

Gentleman would give him an explicit answer. By this Bill it was provided that certain loans were to be made. The phrase was, that a sum or sums of money was to br raised by way of impress — to what amount? [The Chancellor of the Exchequer: That is mentioned in the resolutions of the House.] Ay, by the resolution of Committee, passed the other evening, a sum of money not less than 300,000*l.* was to be raised. [The Chancellor of the Exchequer: Not more than 300,000*l.*] He begged pardon—not more than 300,000*l.* But, then, by the 17th clause, certain other grants were to be made. Now, he wanted to know if it was in the recollection of any Member of the House—he did not care how old he was in his experience—the hon. Member for Montrose, or the right hon. Gentleman opposite (Mr. Goulburn), he wanted to know if ever, in their experience, a Chancellor of the Exchequer had come down to the House, on a great occasion like this, to demand money from the House of Commons, without explaining first what he thought was a rough estimate of the claim; and, next, the mode in which he proposed to raise the money so demanded? This was a most important question. He knew, and the Chancellor of the Exchequer knew, that if he were to say within the next ten minutes that he were to raise the money by an increase of the income tax, would not that raise a flame from one end of the kingdom to the other? ["No!"] Not, perhaps, in Ireland, where it was not to be paid. But he knew that it would throughout England and throughout Scotland. If, again, he were to say that he meant to raise the money by loan, would not that produce an important effect throughout the country? Well, then, how were they going to do it? They could not do it by magic. The right hon. Gentleman was to get money, He wanted to know how; and, he thought, in justice to the people of England, they ought to be told how; particularly when they heard one hon. Member get up and pledge the honour of Ireland that these loans would be repaid, and another get up and beg them not to trust to the honour of Ireland, as it was impossible they would be paid. But, at any rate, they must be paid by the people of England; and, therefore, in justice to the country, he had a right to ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, not with a view to bind him to any specific sum—but the right hon. Gentleman must have made some calculation; no one in his position would dare to come down to the House without making a calculation — he must know, by a rough calculation, how much he expected would answer the present pressing exigency. He would put it, therefore, to the right hon. Gentleman again and again; he wanted to know the sum he expected to raise. It was a fair question; he wanted an explicit answer. He pressed for it—he expected it—what was more, he demanded it. He was not to be put off to the budget; a fortnight was too long to wait; they had been very patient already. He wondered — he was astonished — nay, more, he was at a loss for a phrase which would express the state of his mind—the perfect astoundment he felt at the patience of the hon. Member for Montrose. That hon. Gentleman had, indeed, put the question to Ministers, but in so very mild a form that really the Chancellor of the Exchequer had only to turn round and say that he would tell him some other day. He wished the hon. Gentleman would show some of the vigour of his former days, and insist upon an answer. He hoped Ministers did not intend to play with the people of this country. They occupied their present seats, and they enjoyed the honours and the gains attendant thereupon; but he wished they would show that they felt some of the consequent obligations, and deal fairly by the House. Let the Chancellor of the Exchequer meet the question of these difficulties fairly. It was his duty, as a servant of the country, to come down to the House and say, "This is our difficulty; here are the sums which I propose to raise, and these are the means by which I propose to raise them; and, if you don't agree with me, say so, and I shall not go farther." But it was not dealing fairly by the House to lead them on step by step—to engage them in petty arguments as to the details of the Bill—while the great argument of all had not once been brought before the House since it met. They had talked much of the evils of Ireland; but they had never been told how the expense of meeting those evils was to be met. He now demanded an answer to his question.

The CHANCELLOR of the EXCHEQUER said, the hon. Gentleman had put a question to him in a very pointed way, as if he had been disposed to evade or to deny giving an answer. Now, he begged to say, that the hon. Gentleman had never put that question before in any way whatever. He did not think that his conduct, while in office, called for the mode of interrogation adopted by the hon. Gentleman; and he was now ready to give such an answer as, under the circumstances, he should be justified in giving. It was very true that this question had been put to his noble Friend at the head of the Government on a former occasion; to which the noble Lord gave the only answer that at that time he was justified in giving; and he would say, further, that he did not think he could or that he would be justified in stating to-night what would more properly form part of the statement which his noble Friend had promised either he (the Chancellor of the Exchequer) or his noble Friend would make in the course of the next fortnight, as to the sums of money that would be required during the year, and the mode by which they were to be raised. He did not think that he ought to anticipate the annual financial statement by answering the question which had been put by the hon. Gentleman in such an unusual tone. In fact, he had a difficulty in stating it. He could state very well the expense of moneys that had been already issued. He might state, that the sum issued from the Exchequer, from the 1st of September up to the end of January, was two millions sterling. But he had better state the whole amount of the expenditure from the beginning of last year. The advances for the grand-jury presentments from the 1st of January, 1846, up to the 1st of September, were 125,800*l.* The presentments from the 1st of September were 1,372,000*l.*, of which 463,000*l.* had been sanctioned by the Treasury up to the 30th of January. The presentments under the 9th and 10th of Victoria amounted to 6,127,000*l.*, to be levied in Ireland, being presented by the gentry of Ireland themselves; and the amount that had been accepted by the Treasury was 2,500,000*l.* As he had already stated, 2,000,000*l.* had been advanced from September to the 1st of January. What sum it might be necessary to advance between this and next August, it was, of course, impossible to say to a nicety. It would clearly be necessary to advance some millions of money. There had been a million expended in the month of January; but that expenditure, he expected, would be considerably reduced, as the labour would be absorbed in field cultivation, and as the system which they were now about to substitute for the Labour-rate and for public works would make a still further saving, as under it much of the former temptation to abuse would be taken away. With regard to the amount to which the House was pledged, he would state that the House was pledged by this Bill to advance a sum not exceeding 300,000*l.* from the Consolidated Fund; and he meant to propose that other sums should be voted from time to time, in Committees of Supply; and he could assure them that the House would never be pledged to more than it voted. At the present time the House was pledged to a vote of 300,000*l.*, and no more. When they came, in Committee of Supply, to vote a further sum, it would be necessary that the House should be pledged to that vote, and to no more. He did not think it was necessary that he should say more as to the sums that were to be provided, or as to the mode in which they were to be raised.

Mr. ROEBUCK could assure the right hon. Gentleman that he had no intention of doing anything unusual or offensive in the slightest degree to the right hon. Gentleman. He had asked merely what would be the probable expenditure under that Bill, the Bill which was then under consideration. They had nothing to do with the Presentment Bill at present. The right hon. Gentleman had answered that the intention was to limit the expenditure to 300,000*l.*; but the clause said that the Commissioners were to have the power of expending "any sum or sums" under such regulations as the Commissioners of the Treasury should impose. He was well aware that the House had voted 300,000*l.* for the purposes of this Bill; but that was not all: there were grants to be made out of the Consolidated Fund; and what he wanted to know was, whether the Government had made any calculation of the probable cost to the people of England of maintaining the people of Ireland so long as this Bill should continue in operation. Now, that question the right hon. Gentleman had not answered; for he knew that it must be much more than 300,000*l.* The right hon. Gentleman had given him a technical reply, which would not satisfy the people of England. The House of Commons was about to vote money in the dark; they were not in a condition to decide upon this question; and he hoped that there were some Members in that House representing the people of England who would be found to resist that course, in spite of all the declamation of hon. Gentlemen opposite; in spite of all their declarations as to the closeness of that union which at other times they were so anxious to dissolve—declarations made in time of want, in time of starvation, by hon. Gentlemen, who afterwards would be found in Conciliation Hall talking loudly of the advantages of separation. The hon. Gentleman opposite (Mr. Smith O'Brien) had certainly stuck to his text; but as to the hon. Member for Cork, it was easy enough to see what was his view of separation; it was clear that he would be willing to create any despotism, however great, which would take from England as much as England ~~would~~ give. The Government were now asking the House of Commons to vote an indefinite amount of money; and it was clear that they had not made any calculation as to the probable extent of their demands; or if they had, that the sum was so large that they were afraid of declaring it to the House.

The CHANCELLOR of the EXCHEQUER said, that after all the hon. and learned Gentleman was mistaken as to the clauses of the Bill; and if he had been a little more regular, and had waited until the clauses were brought up, he would have fonnd that his supposition was incorrect. He (the Chancellor of the Exchequer) was going to bring up a clause which would limit the advances to be made under this Bill to the 300,000*l.* which the House had voted. If the hon. Gentleman had waited, instead of interrupting the progress of the Bill at the 16th clause, he would have relieved both of them from the necessity of making two speeches on the subject. The 2nd clause, which was about to be brought up, gave the Commissioners the power of making advances out of any grants voted in Committee of Supply. He hoped he had now made himself clearly understood. He repeated that the House of Commons would not be pledged beyond the sum which each time might be voted, and that the clause would only give to the Commissioners a general power of applying the money from time to time as it was voted; but he was not prepared at that time to anticipate the financial statement which would be made a fortnight hence.

Mr. SMITH O'BRIEN thought it unjust that one particular class of property should bear all the burden of the rates to be imposed by this Bill. He wished also to know what was to be the end of this unproductive expenditure? He could understand the proposal of the noble Lord the Member for Lynn, who said that he would take off 100,000 men from the unproductive works in which they were now employed; but he saw nothing in the Government measures to put a stop to the present system. If it were continued, the expense would be greater next year than this; and though it might be a great grievance to England to have such a drain upon her resources, it was even a greater grievance to Ireland.

Mr. F. FRENCH said, that if the present system were not effectually checked, he admitted it would completely exhaust the resources of the country; and it was most desirable, therefore, that the agricultural interest should have information on the subject mooted by the hon. and learned Member for Bath; but it was impossible that the right hon. Gentleman the Chancellor of the Exchequer could at present give any satisfactory answer, because the expense to be incurred under this Bill must depend upon the effect of the auxiliary measures proposed by the Government.

Mr. M. O'FERRALL proposed that some facilities should be given for the immediate collection of the rates; and that they should be collected in the first instance from the landlords.

Mr. E. DENISON wished to ask a question upon a point which would excite some attention in that House and the country. He alluded to the Poor Law Bill. He had hitherto sat in anxious and wondering silence during these debates. They had heard the question of rating adjourned till the Poor Law Bill came into operation. They had heard also a great deal of very significant remarks on the subject of that Bill. The English and Scotch Members had acquiesced in, he would not say approved, the measures of the Government, on the distinct understanding that an efficient poor law was to be enacted for Ireland. The Irish Members had acquiesced in the same measures, because to some extent they considered that they met the exigency of the case, but with an understanding amongst themselves that the poor law could not pass as it was now framed, and must be strongly resisted. He therefore wished to ask, was the Poor Law Bill to have the substantial support of the Government, and was it to become law? Before they proceeded further with the Government measures, he thought that that question ought to be distinctly answered.

Sir G. GREY said, that the hon. Gentleman had asked a very extraordinary question, because the Bill to which the hon. Gentleman referred had been ordered to be brought in, and had been brought in by the First Lord of the Treasury, the Secretary for Ireland, and himself, three Members of the Government. That Bill would, therefore, of course, be supported by the Government: and having been read a second time on the Motion of his noble Friend, it stood for Committee on an early day; and until the hon. Gentleman asked the question, he did not know that there had been even a surmise that the Government had any intention of abandoning it.

Mr. SHAW: The hon. and learned Member for Bath is very dictatorial in his tone, very fond of asking questions and demanding explicit answers. Now I beg to ask the hon. and learned Gentleman one short question—what does he want? What does he mean by his present course? Is it that if the Chancellor of the Exchequer cannot exactly calculate the sum that may be required—and that, assuming the landlords of Ireland to be as bad as he (Mr. Roebuck) describes them—that therefore the people of Ireland shall be allowed to starve? The right hon. Gentleman the Chancellor of the Exchequer declares most truly that it is impossible to estimate the precise cost of such an unusual emergency. The right hon. Gentleman at the same moment informed the House, that the landlords of Ireland, so far from being the selfish and niggardly beings they are accused of in this House, had actually charged themselves within the last few months with a sum of more than six millions of money for the relief of the present distress. That might have been reckless in some cases; for some of the baronies were assessed beyond the value of their entire rentals; but at all events, it was not heartless, as was imputed to them. In the barony I reside, I was a party to assessing it with 10,000*l.* for the relief of the distressed; and there it was as sure to be repaid as if imposed upon the barony or parish in which the hon. and learned Gentleman resides in England. But suppose the landed proprietors of Ireland were as insensible to their duties as the hon. and learned Member unjustly and untruly represents them to be, is that any reason why the people of Ireland are to perish of want? [Mr. Roebuck: No.] Yes; but while you are talking they are starving. Do you disbelieve the well-authenticated accounts which daily arrive from the remote districts of that country, that hundreds of the population are dying from starvation? If not, then, for God's sake, put off your bickerings and your bitterness to a more decent occasion, and no longer interrupt this measure for their relief. I feel night after night ashamed, and, as an Irishman, degraded, to hear English Members boasting of their own generosity, and upbraiding Ireland with her present poverty and affliction. With all my heart, I had desired and hoped up to a late period of the awful visitation with which it has pleased Providence to afflict us, that we could have sustained ourselves independently; but it became too heavy to be borne by any one part of the United Kingdom. It assumed all the character of a national calamity; and are we to be reproached because the Government ask this House to let it fall upon the national resources?

Mr. ROEBUCK: The hon. Gentleman is a judge. He said he would ask me one question; he has asked me three. He has asked me a question with an inuendo: he asked me, "Do you want the people to starve?" Now, do you consider that an honest question. [Mr. Shaw: Quite so.] Then I suppose that is the way you act when you are a judge. You insinuate that I mean to say that I wish the people of Ireland to starve. "Hear," says one; "Yes," says another; and this one says, "It's a proper question." The hon. and learned Member then proceeded to say, that he would tell the hon. Member what he wanted: he wanted the Government of England to devise effectual means to prevent the people of Ireland from starving; but in so doing, to pledge all the property of Ireland to the repayment of the debt. And when the hon. Gentleman talked of common prudence, and said that the gentlemen of Ireland had presented more than in prudence they ought to have done; why, he thought that they had been told throughout these debates that the present were uncommon circumstances, and that uncommon means were required to meet them; and certainly the gentlemen of Ireland had taken uncommon means, for they had presented works which would cost 600,000*l.*, and then they had come to England to ask her to pay for them, as though he should say, "Lend me 500,000*l.*, indeed I can't repay you; I can present the demand, but common prudence will not justify me in paying it;" and common prudence would not suggest that the man should lend the money. ["Hear!" *and* "Oh, oh!"] It was unfair that he should be exposed to those interruptions. He had not a hundred mouths nor a hundred ears; but he had one mouth which should be heard in that House whilst he was standing up, as they well knew out of doors that he was standing up, for the honest and industrious artisans of his own country, as opposed to the landlords of Ireland. He was not opposing anything like a full and generous provision for the Irish people; he wanted a generous provision for them, and not only at the present time, but hereafter. He wanted to mortgage Ireland for its poor; and in doing so he did not care one farthing what became of the landlords of Ireland; he did not care what the Irish landlords might say of common prudence; he had a right to protect the hard earnings of his own countrymen; and although it might be very well for those hon. Gentlemen to come and say, "Give us your hard earnings," he would not give them except to the Irish people. He was supported by every English Member in that House, and they would make generous provision for the Irish poor; but they would not for the Irish landlords. Nobody directly claimed it; but very significant statements were constantly made in that House. When hon. Gentlemen spoke of a national calamity to be met by a national tax, what did they mean? But he would not only provide present relief, but he would have the Irish people placed in such a position that it should be worth the while of the Irish gentry to attend to their own affairs—to see to the management of their own property—and he pledged himself that the present Session should not go on without strenuous exertions being made to introduce a stringent poor law into Ireland; and he knew that no measure could be more distasteful to the Irish landlords. He hoped that he had now given a full and specific answer to the question of the hon. Gentleman. He did not want the Irish people to starve; it was an insult to him and to the English people to make such an insinuation; he wanted a full and generous provision to be made for them; but he also wanted to pledge the whole property of Ireland to the repayment of the money now advanced, and to the future maintenance of the poor.

MR. BELLEW looked to the other measures of the Government, rather than the present, for the greatest amount of relief. He believed that a great many Irish landlords had behaved very well; but he also thought that some had not fully discharged their duty on so trying an occasion. He, for one, would not oppose a poor law, or any other measure, however stringent, which would provide for the future maintenance of the poor. He did not think that the money advanced could be repaid in many parts of Ireland; but the Bill to which he looked especially as the great measure of relief was that for facilitating the sale of incumbered estates. Whatever temporary measures they might resort to, they must ultimately come to a change of property. At present, however, he asked, with the hon. and learned Recorder, what was to be done? Admitting that part of this money never could be repaid, was that a reason why the Imperial Government should refuse to afford any relief to the Irish people?

MR. HUME regretted very much the angry tone in which this debate had been carried on. His hon. and learned Friend had merely asked the Chancellor of the Exchequer what he (Mr. Hume) considered a very proper question, and one not by any means unusual, whether the Government had at all calculated the amount which would be required under the present Bill; and the Chancellor of the Exchequer had given to that question as distinct an answer as he could be expected to give under the present unusual circumstances of the country. 300,000*l.* was the estimated expense for a month. He understood the Chancellor of the Exchequer to say that the expenses would be reduced so as to bring the estimate to 300,000*l.* a month. Viewing it, then, in the most favourable light, he should like to know in what state matters would be by the month of October? His own opinion was, that matters would be worse then than now, because, according to the admission of men of all parties, the outlay already incurred had been productive of mischief instead of good. ["No, no!"] Well, some little good had been done, but a great deal of mischief. ["No, no!"] Let him (Mr. Hume) not be told that such was not the case. Why, the reports of public officers, who had no interest in stating anything but the truth, had established his position beyond the power of contradiction. His hon. and learned Friend was, therefore, quite right in following up his second question, and asking what other measures, if any, were to be adopted for stopping the present waste of money? To that no answer had been given; and he was convinced that Government were going on from step to step in incurring expense, without making up their minds as to what measures should be adopted for stopping the drain of money. He was of opinion that the people of England would not allow such a state of things to go on much longer. The Chancellor of the Exchequer had promised that in fourteen days the financial statement should be made; but before then measures for the radical and permanent cure of Ireland's disease ought to be introduced, and not one of them had yet been laid upon the Table: 2,500,000*l.* had already been expended; and if to this were added the 300,000*l.* voted for the purposes of the Bill now under consideration, the total was 2,800,000*l.* He would enter his protest against the temporising policy adopted and adhered to by Ministers. Some general comprehensive plan for relieving the immediate wants of Ireland ought to be adopted, in conjunction with measures calculated to bring about the permanent regeneration of Ireland.

Lord J. MANNERS wished to impress upon Irish Members the fact, that the disparaging language which had been made use of by the hon. and learned Member for Bath, had not been sanctioned by the English Members who sat on his side of the House; and that the little support which had been given to that hon. and learned Member on that and other evenings, had been derived from Gentlemen professing the same political principles and sitting on the same side of the House with himself. He was bound to confess that, multitudinous as the hon. and learned Member's speeches had been, he had been unable to understand what measures he was himself prepared to propose. He had failed to enunciate one practical proposition; and, with all respect for the hon. and learned Gentleman, he must say that he thought the people of Ireland would not derive much benefit from his labours. The effect of his efforts had been to impede the progress of measures, while nothing to supply their place had been produced. He was disposed to think that the people of England would not enlist under the banners of the hon. and learned Member. He believed, on the contrary, that the English people were, under present circumstances, ready to administer to the people of Ireland the means of relief, rather than examine into the past conduct of Irish Members or Irish landlords; and that while for the future Irish property must be made answerable for Irish obligations, the people of England were not now inclined to wait and hesitate till every tittle of blame was meted out, while the Irish people were dying of starvation. Such was the feeling of England; and he begged Irish Members not to believe that the hon. and learned Member for Bath fairly and truly represented the feeling of the English people.

Mr. ROEBUCK said, that a large censure had been dealt out by the noble Lord on many Gentlemen sitting on his (Mr. Roebuck's) side of the House; but he thought he had heard opinions similar to those he had himself expressed proceeding from Members who sat on the same bench with the noble Lord, but a little farther up.

Dr. BOWRING, like the noble Lord, was anxious to forget the past, and to apply himself, like the hon. and learned Member for Bath, to the future. From the honest declarations of the Irish Members, he confessed that he had gathered a great deal of information. They had told the House that with respect to the grants there must be no delusion, for a great portion of the money would not be repaid—that a great portion of what was advanced, no matter in what shape the advance might be made, could not be repaid. This state of matters called for the serious consideration of English Members, in so far as protective legislation was concerned. In connexion with the non-payment of the money, it had also been honestly allowed by many of the Irish Members, that, in spite of what was now doing and of what was intended, Ireland's sufferings would continue. Was not that a serious question? And did it not show the necessity of English Members proceeding to consider what ought to be done under such circumstances? He, for one, was prepared to deal liberally with that country, and to concede to her people all the benefits of the Union. But would the measures proposed by Ministers accomplish that object? If Session after Session the same course was to be pursued—if important discussions were mixed up with personalities—and if an hon. Member could not express his sentiments freely without drawing down upon himself a heap of animadversion and recrimination—he could not anticipate the continuance of such a state of things without alarm. Hon. Members on his (Dr. Bowring's) side of the House were as anxious as hon. Members on the opposite to vote money for relieving the immediate sufferings of the Irish people; but were those hon. Gentlemen as ready to do justice to the Irish people as were those on his side of the House?

Were they ready to give full effect to the expression of Irish opinion? Were they prepared to deal with the grave and all-important question of the Irish Church? These hon. Gentlemen complained of the result of English legislation, and referred in illustration to the distress and discontent which prevailed; but were they ready to meet the evil, and concede Ireland's just demands? He did not wonder that there should grow up in that country a desire for local legislation, looking at the manner in which the claims and interests of Ireland had been neglected by the Imperial Parliament. For his own part, he thought that in many respects it might be advantageous to allow Ireland a greater degree of self-legislation in local matters than she at present possessed.

SIR C. NAPIER said, that with respect to the question as to whether the Irish landlords had done their duty, he could not pretend to give an answer; and, more than that, he believed that many of the Gentlemen who had said so much on the subject, knew as little about the matter as he did. If the Irish landlords had not done their duty, why did not former Governments force them to do so years and years before the present extraordinary calamity occurred? He would ask if English landlords had done their duty? Had those landlords who had immense properties in Ireland, and who lived in England—had these men, he would ask, done their duty? He thought that in the extraordinary circumstances which existed, these landlords ought to leave the pleasures and comforts of a London life, go to Ireland, live on their estates, and administer to the wants of their poor dependants. It was not enough to tell him that the agents of these men were doing this or that. Everybody knew how beneficial the presence of a proprietor was upon his estate. Let them look to the injurious consequences which arose to the mechanics and others employed on an English estate, when the landlord left his property for a length of time, and entrusted the management to agents. Let the House suppose that the Duke of Devonshire, the Marquess of Lansdowne, and other large proprietors, went to Ireland, lived there, and administered to the wants of their tenantry, would any one tell him that no more benefit would be derived than was at present enjoyed by means of agents? He would say, however, that the House were called upon to relieve Ireland. How could any Christian hear of men, women, and children dying in ditches, of starvation, when he himself was living in comfort and eating his warm dinner, without doing something to relieve the distress of his fellow-creatures? Much as he should rejoice to see the Irish landlords do their duty, still as a Christian man he was prepared to go the utmost length in carrying out measures for the relief of the starving Irish.

VISCOUNT CLEMENTS explained that he had not the slightest doubt of the will and inclination of the Irish people and Irish landlords to pay their debts; but what he said was, that it was necessary, in order to enable them to do so, that more vigorous measures to draw out the powers and capabilities of the country should be adopted, than any that had been introduced by Her Majesty's Government. He held in his hand a return, stating that there were 519,248 persons in Ireland rated at 4*l.* and under, and whose rates were paid by the immediate lessors; and in a country destitute of manufactures, how was that vast population to be supported, unless Government adopted some measures calculated for their permanent relief?

MR. BERNAL was sorry that his hon. and gallant Friend should have been unguardedly betrayed into the utterance of a sentiment calculated to excite, in the present exciteable times, a feeling of odium and animadversion towards a respectable body of gentlemen—the absentee proprietors of Ireland. He asked his gallant Friend with what degree of justice he could utter the censure he had done? He (Mr. Bernal) would assert, that the larger portion of the absentee landlords were doing their duty in every sense. He knew many of them who spent the whole of their incomes for the advantage of their tenants and the improvement of their property. He might speak of one case, where the rental amounted to 30,000*l.* a year, and where all that was realized was expended for the benefit of the tenantry. He would not name the gentleman to whom he was alluding, because he was already well known, and because he had no authority to particularize him. He deemed it unjustifiable to charge the absentees with any want of charity or liberality towards their tenants. He thought the speech of his hon. and learned Friend near him (Mr. Roebuck) was misplaced; many opportunities might arise in which it might be spoken with much advantage. Did his learned Friend deem the Bill necessary, or did he not? If he deemed it necessary, why did he not allow it to go on?

Clause ordered to stand part of the Bill.

Remaining clauses of the Bill agreed to.

House resumed. Bill to be reported.

BREWING FROM SUGAR BILL.

On the Motion that the House resolve itself into Committee on the Brewing from Sugar Bill,

Mr. W. MILES expressed his regret that the Government had not assented to the proposition of his noble Friend (Lord G. Bentinck) the Member for Lynn, to make this a temporary instead of a permanent measure, as he thought it would then have had the effect of sparing a considerable quantity of grain. The Bill before them was for the use of sugar in breweries; and, in reference to this subject, he doubted not they had all seen a very able pamphlet which had been laid on their Table, under the title of *Good and Cheap Beer for the Million*. The writer took five years, ending November 5, 1845, and he placed the average price of malt at 31*s.* 8*d.* It now realized from 32*s.* to 40*s.*; and in respect of the experiments which had been made, they went to show that the equivalent of sugar to malt was somewhat higher than the gentleman to whom he had referred had placed it, viz. at 180 lbs. of sugar to one quarter of malt; and what they had to consider was, whether the use of sugar would wholly, or even generally, throw malt out of use for brewing purposes. He (Mr. Miles) thought these experiments had been carried on on too small a scale, because he was of opinion that the extraction of sugar by larger quantities would have given a different result from that which had been produced. Still, however, pretty nearly the medium appeared to have been taken. He would, then, put the equivalent at 180 lbs.; and then, taking the price of barley at between 32*s.* and 40*s.*, and adding the charges for malting, about 24*s.*, they would have malt at from 56*s.* to 64*s.* Now, he found that, with malt at 56*s.*, the relative value of sugar per cwt. would be 31*s.* 11*d.*—a price which, it would be admitted, was perfectly ridiculous. Going up to 64*s.* for malt, the relative price per cwt. of sugar would be 39*s.* 9*d.* But the price of sugar was 47*s.* 3*d.* before the Bill was brought forward; at that price it would only enter into competition against malt when malt was at 76*s.* He could not say, at that price the use of sugar would be very injurious to the consumption of malt, as, in brewing with the latter, there was a large amount of refuse which made excellent food for cattle, while in sugar there was nothing. The Breweries Bill, and that for the use of sugar in distilleries, might be discussed together, as they could not allow it to one, and refuse it to the other; and he looked at the latter also as a colonial question. They ought to see how their colonies would be affected; and on referring to the results of certain calculations which had been published, he found that, in three classes of sugar, the prices were as follows: Jamaica, 47*s.*; Mauritius, 48*s.*; and Havannah or Cuba, 49*s.* The last had to pay a duty of 7*s.*, which proved that it could be sold cheaper than Jamaica, if the duty was taken off, by 5*s.*; besides which, the yield of Jamaica was only as 100 to Mauritius 200, and Havannah 300. Besides this, the quantity of alcohol extracted from the Cuba sugar was 3¾ per cent more than Jamaica; and when the duties were equalized, he thought the measure would tend as little to the advantage of the British colonies as to the British agriculturist. The hon. Gentleman read a letter which had appeared in the newspapers, on the subject of the duties on rum, in which some startling disclosures were also made as to sugar. The writer, who was a distiller, affirmed that the use of Cuba sugar would more than compensate for the differential duties on rum. He thought that as the present corn law was to be abolished in 1849, and the sugar duties assimilated in 1851, it was, to say the least, a strange proceeding now to legislate in a way which would produce a serious effect both on the colonies and the British producer. He regretted it was not a temporary measure. He would, like his right hon. Friend the Member for Cambridge, have consented to try it for two or three years, in order that its full bearings might be developed, But, considering the great alterations they were making, to pass these measures permanently was to start on a fearful experiment, without due consideration and inquiry. He complained that proper inquiry into the probable effects of the measure had been refused; and he hoped and trusted that in the Upper House a full inquiry would be instituted as to the probable effects the measure would have on the colonists and manufacturers. In that belief, he and the Gentlemen with whom he had the honour to act, would offer no opposition to the measure in that House.

Mr. JAMES said, that under the present system, a rich man was allowed to brew beer from sugar, but the poor man who was obliged to purchase his beer in small quantities, was deprived of a better article by not being permitted the use of sugar in public breweries. It was well known that an inferior quality of malt with a little sugar, would make a better, and cheaper, and more wholesome beverage, than that which might be made from all malt. He hoped that the Government would not yield to the interested clamours of Irish and Scotch distillers, who wished to retain a monopoly against the interests of the public. The colonial producers were now placed in competition with the growers of slave produce under great disadvantages, from the dearness and scarcity of labour; and that ought to be taken into consideration in reference to measures relating to the colonies. Notwithstanding those disadvantages, there was a duty of 6*d.* per gallon on rum still to be retained; and if to that were added the cost of freight, leakage, and dock-charges—which could not be less than a shilling—it would make 1*s.* 6*d.* a gallon. The Government had his best thanks for the measures which they had introduced.

Mr. FINCH would have preferred the measure as a temporary expedient; but would throw no impediments in the way of passing the Bill. With respect to distillation, of which the Irish Members complained so much, he had only to say, that if they had come forward last Session and aided the protectionists in opposing the pernicious principles of free trade, which with their aid might have been done successfully, they would have escaped a far greater evil than the Distilleries Bill. If the Irish Members would even then unite with them, they might regain the protection they had only lost by their dereliction, and return to the old sound system, which he so much regretted, and of which they were now discovering the value.

Mr. M. MILNES wished an instruction to be given to the Committee to introduce, with sugar, permission to introduce fresh liquorice into breweries, which would be a great boon to the liquorice growers of Yorkshire and Lincolnshire.

The CHANCELLOR of the EXCHEQUER objected on the same grounds as those on which it was now forbidden, namely, that, under the guise of liquorice, noxious drugs might be introduced into the composition of beer.

House in Committee.

On the 1st Clause,

Mr. NEWDEGATE said, that the terms of the clause, which mentioned the use of sugar in breweries, implied the disuse of barley; and he contended, therefore, that before the Bill was introduced, a full inquiry ought to have taken place as to the effect of that displacement. Without such an inquiry, he could not believe the Government would, under those circumstances, pass the measure. Should they do so, those Gentlemen with whom he had the honour to act, would content themselves with entering on the question at a future time. The effects of the measure would be more fully developed when the duties on foreign and colonial sugars were assimilated, and the question must therefore be then further discussed. For his own part, when he found that in the present year foreign sugar to the amount of 600,000*l.* had been entered for consumption, he considered it as a colonial question; and he felt certain the colonists themselves would insist in 1851 on its being reconsidered. He should, therefore, make no further opposition at that time, but entered his protest against the measure being considered a permanent one.

Sir W. CLAY begged to mention a case of peculiar hardship. Under the present excise laws sugar was prohibited from being used in the colouring of drinks; but this Bill, by giving permission for the use of sugar in large breweries, virtually abolished that regulation, which still remained in full force against publicans who themselves brewed the ale they sold. He trusted the Government would make some alteration in the excise regulations to meet this case.

The Marquess of GRANBY begged to ask the House what was the object for which this Bill was proposed? He thought it was for the purpose of saving the barley by the substitution of sugar for malt; but now they were told that the consumption of malt was to be increased. It was impossible that Government could pass the Bill, if what the hon. Member for Cumberland had said was true. The Chancellor of the Exchequer, he rather thought, had made use of the same sort of argument on a previous occasion. He concurred with the hon. Member for Warwickshire, that it might be injurious to the colonies and to the agriculture of that county; and he thought, therefore, that all parties were called on to pause before they passed the measure.

Clause agreed to.

Clauses 2 to 11 agreed to. On the Motion that the Preamble be agreed to,

MR. T. BARING observed, that the present Bill was quite inconsistent with the legislation of the last Session. In the last Session, the House passed a Bill avowedly for the purpose of reducing the price of sugar to the consumer; now they were about to pass a measure which, in its result, must increase the price of sugar. Another point was, the present measure was introduced under false pretences. It was alluded to in the Queen's Speech as a measure which was to be productive of relief to Ireland; but the Chancellor of the Exchequer, in introducing the Bill, touched very lightly on that point, and recommended it mainly as a boon to the colonial interest, and a question relating to revenue. If the Bill had been intended as a measure of relief to Ireland, it would have been introduced, like the other measures, as one of a temporary nature. As regarded the colonial interest, he thought they were entitled to any boon which the Lsgislature could confer upon them; but he doubted whether when the term arrived, the colonial interest would not find that their present expectations had been disappointed. He would not detain the Committee longer, having only been anxious to point out the fact that the House was now passing a Bill which must have the effect of raising the price of sugar; whereas last year it passed another measure the declared object of which was to reduce the price of that article to the consumer.

Preamble agreed to. House resumed. Bill to be reported.

House adjourned at half-past Twelve o'clock.

HOUSE OF LORDS,

Tuesday, February 9, 1847.

MINUTES.] *Reported.*—Chelsea Pensions.
3ª and passed:—Buck Wheat, &c. Importation.
PETITIONS PRESENTED. From the Parish of St. Helen, Ipswich, for the Repeal of the Poor Removal Act, and for the Passing of a Law enforcing a Union Settlement, and a Union Rating.—From Manchester, respecting the Proposed See of Manchester.

THE PARISH OF MANCHESTER.

LORD STANLEY presented a petition, for which he claimed attention, as it appeared to him of no little importance as respected the spiritual interests of the Church, more especially that part of the Church consisting of the community of the town of Manchester. The petition proceeded from the churchwardens of the parish of Manchester, elected annually by the whole of the parish, comprising a population of 400,000 persons; and the petitioners complained that while the rectorial revenues of that parish, amounting, as they stated, to above 5,000*l.* a-year, but, he believed, exceeding 6,000*l.*, were received by the dean and fellows of the collegiate church of Manchester, yet the dean and fellows claimed—and perhaps under the law they were technically correct—to be exempt from residence, and from the cure of souls, and that as far as these parties were concerned, the parish of Manchester, comprising 400,000 persons, was all but destitute of spiritual provision and assistance. The petition was not prepared in any hostile spirit against the Church Establishment. Had it been, he should have requested that it might be placed in other hands than his to present; but he was of opinion with the petitioners that it was not for the interest of the Church itself to have such cases overlooked, neglected, or kept in the background. The petitioners maintained that such a state of things as they represented was a great injury to the parish; that it was a scandal and a blot, tending to bring the Establishment into disrepute; that it was for the true interests of the Church that it should not remain unredressed; and that, with a view of preserving to that Church to which they were attached the general esteem of the large and important community to which they belonged, and of thereby promoting the stability of the Church, and not from any feeling of hostility to the members of the chapter, they were induced to bring the case before their Lordships, in a full reliance that an evil of such magnitude would not be allowed to remain unredressed. The petitioners stated that originally Manchester was an ancient rectory with the cure of souls, and endowed with tithes and emoluments which amount- in 1291 to the annual value of 53*l.* 6*s.* 8*d.*; that the rectory continued to be a corporation sole until 1421, when Thomas Delaware, the rector, called a meeting of the inhabitants, and after stating that the parish was large and populous, and that some of the rectors had been non-resident, pleaded that, for the great honour of the town, a collegiate church should be endowed, and offered at his own expense to erect that costly building. This was agreed to, funds were added by voluntary contribution, and provision was set apart for the college, in which it was settled that divine worship should be celebrated daily. Their Lordships would observe that at that time the complaint was of non-residence. The petition then proceeded to state—

"That during the first year of the reign of Queen Elizabeth, the lands and revenues of the college were taken under the control of the Crown. The Archbishop of York was intrusted with the supervision, and the warden and fellows were enjoined to residence and diligent preaching every Sunday in the church of Manchester, or one of the seven chapels of ease in the parish. That well-founded complaints having been brought that the funds of the rectory had been alienated, the college was dissolved; and by a charter granted in the 20th year of the reign of Queen Elizabeth, after reciting that a certain college called St. Mary's, founded in order that the parishioners, to the number of 10,000, should thereby be instructed in all true Christian knowledge, was deemed to be dissolved, it was ordained that there should be one college, to be called Christ's College, and to consist of one warden, four fellows, two chaplains, four singing men, four singing boys, and that the warden should receive 4*s.* every day that he should be present and resident; each fellow 16*d.*; each chaplain 6¾*d.* And because the said college had sustained great loss by the absence of the wardens who discharged no part of the duty and charge by their office enjoined on them, it was hereby also decreed that neither warden nor fellow should receive any rents or revenues of the said college, but only when they were present or gone to visit the sick, or preach in some village in the parish of Manchester; but there were given to the warden eighty days of absence, and to each fellow sixty days. That in the tenth year of the reign of King Charles the First great complaints of neglect of duty and misappropriation of revenues having been made against the then warden (who was described as a great pluralist and mighty hunter after ecclesiastical dignities and benefices, as never intending to reside, and refusing to take the oaths which bound him to residence), and the grievances complained of not having been redressed, the then warden was, on a petition and representation of the case to the Crown, dismissed from his wardenship, and the existing charter was granted, whereby after reciting that the college was erected to this end, that in the church thereof should be daily prayers solemnly made, that the sacraments and other Divine services should be celebrated, and that the King's subjects, the parishioners, which were then to the number of 20,000, might be instructed in the duties of piety towards God, and obedience towards the King, and of honest life and conversation towards one another, but that it came to pass, by negligence, and absence, or covetousness of the warden and fellows, that the objects of the foundation were defeated, it was ordained that the warden should be removed, the college dissolved, and another be founded, to consist of one warden, four fellows, two chaplains, four singing men, and four singing boys, and to be paid thus: the warden 70*l.* per annum; each fellow, 35*l.* per annum; each chaplain, 17*l.* 10*s.* and marriage dues (*salvo semper jure clericorum parochiorum*); each singing man, 10*l.*; each singing boy, 5*l.* That any further increase of rents should be received by the warden and fellows, but not till the church should be repaired according to the dignity and honour of the place; and not till a house or houses be provided where the warden and fellows might dwell either together or asunder, and that chaplains should receive increase according to the sound discretion of the warden and fellows. That after also reciting that in the former foundation the college had suffered loss by absence, it was by the same charter determined, ordained, and willed, that the warden and fellows and their successors should continually reside in and frequent (*perpetuo residere et victitare*) the town or parish of Manchester, and that the following fines should be paid to the poor, namely:—By the warden 10*s.* for each omission of a sermon which he ought to preach on Christmas-day, at Easter, on Whitsunday, and Ascension-day (but he might provide a substitute); and 2*s.* 8*d.* for every day on which he should not be present in the town or parish of Manchester, so that he could not, being sought for, visit any sick person, or perform the offices of piety and charity in the said parish; by each fellow 6*s.* 8*d.* on each omission of his monthly sermon, but he might provide a substitute; 1*s.* 4*d.* for every day on which he should not be present in the town or parish of Manchester, so that he could not, being sought for, visit any sick person, or perform the offices of piety and charity in the said parish; also that the warden and fellows, before they should be able to give their voice in the chapter, should bind themselves by oath that they would verily observe the statutes of perpetual residence, or in case of violation to willingly submit to the penalty; and that they would not seek for a dispensation from this oath; but there were excepted 100 days in the year on which the warden was permitted to be absent, and eighty days in the year on which each fellow was permitted to be absent. That the aforesaid fines (though now, from the altered value of money, and the increased revenues of the rectory, become merely nominal and inoperative) were evidently intended to be, and were at the date of the said charter, such as would effectually secure to the parishioners of Manchester constant residence, visitation of the sick, and performance of offices of piety and charity by the warden and each of the four fellows, inasmuch as the warden and fellows were subjected to fines amounting to more than half their income. That the warden and fellows have from time to time, with a view to increase the revenues accruing to them as rectors and parsons of the parish and parish church of Manchester, obtained powers to grant leases of the glebe lands belonging to the said rectory, and instituted suits to establish and enforce payment of tithes in kind arising within the said parish. That in a suit intituled 'Blackburn v. Jepson,' which came on to be heard before Lord Chancellor Eldon, in 1810, the then warden and fellows sought to enforce the payment of tithes, but did not sue in their corporate but in their individual capacities, and founded and established their claims to such tithes as being due to them as rectors of the parish of Manchester in their individual and not in their corporate capacity as a chapter."

Having by these references shown their Lordships that the complaints from the commencement related to non-residence and non-performance of ecclesiastical duty—having shown that the object aimed at by the charter was an abatement of those evils—their Lordships would be surprised to learn that the dean and chapter of Manchester at the present moment declared that by those charters they were not required to reside within the parish of Manchester; that they had no cure of souls; that they were exempt from residence; and that they were bound to do neither more nor less than pay 1*s.* 4*d.* a-day on each day that, being sought for in order that they might perform their duties, they were not to be found. He did not say that technically this construction was not correct. There was no charge of the violation of an oath on account of non-residence, because there was the convenient alternative that these parties should either reside in the parish, according to the intention of the founder, or pay a fine for non-residence. But that fine, as imposed, amounted to about 20*l.* for the year, and originally involved the forfeiture of more than one half of the income of a fellow. The revenues now amounted to about 6,000*l.* a year, and it was obvious that the fine was now perfectly nugatory and insufficient when applied to an income so increased. With all respect for the dean and chapter of Manchester, he must express his astonishment that, in the face of the avowed and notorious intentions of the founder, men of respectability, and of conscientious and religious feelings, as he was bound and did believe those parties to be, could reconcile it to their consciences to receive from the rectorial funds of the parish of Manchester 6,000*l.* a-year, and leave a community of 400,000 persons, in the midst of whom, according to the charter, they should reside and discharge spiritual duties, almost without spiritual instruction, except that which was derived from the establishment of district churches throughout the town. When this provision was originally made, the population was about 20,000, and, besides the collegiate church, there were nine other chapels of ease, in which the rectory was required to perform duty. At the present time there were forty-nine district churches in Manchester, the clergymen attached to which were maintained by fees—one fee being paid for the district church, and another for the mother church; but the whole of the rectorial tithes were received altogether by the dean and chapter. He repeated, that he was surprised that religious and conscientious men could reconcile it to their minds to receive and put into their pockets 6,000*l.* a year out of the rectorial tithes, disclaiming the corresponding duty, and claiming the right of holding benefices in distant parts of the country, and to be exempt from the performance of those duties for which they received such sums. Among the provisions of the charter, it was stated that the chaplains should receive increase of salary according to the sound discretion of the wardens and fellows. These chaplains were the persons who performed the whole duty of the district attached to the collegiate church, comprising a population of 20,000 persons. Would their Lordships believe that the sound discretion of the wardens and fellows had been exercised to the effect of returning the original sum of 17*l.* 10*s.*, as a chaplain's salary, though he did not mean to deny the receipt, at the same time, of the usual fees by the chaplains? This was the whole amount of the salaries paid out of the rectorial revenues to those who performed the whole duty. This matter deserved the attention of their Lordships and the Legislature. The occasion upon which this case had been placed in his (Lord Stanley's) hands was the acceptance of the headship of St. Bees, in Cumberland, by one of the fellows, or canons, as they were now called, of Manchester; that preferment rendering it absolutely necessary that he should reside at St. Bees for seven months in the year; while the duties of the appointment ought, in fact, to engross the whole of his time. The petitioners could not conceive why a canon of Manchester should be exempted from those provisions which applied to rectors in their individual capacity; which prevented their holding more than one benefice, except within certain distances and of certain value; and which would undoubtedly require the residence of the rector of Manchester in that town, if he were a corporation sole. What the parishioners desired was, not that the dean and canons might be deprived of their present advantages, but that, as they had received the emoluments of the rectory, they should comply with those conditions which it was clearly and indisputably the intention of the founder and of the Legislature to impose upon them; namely, that they should reside in the town, and take the cure of souls, instead of devolving upon one or two hard-worked and ill-paid curates the whole duties of a district containing upwards of 20,000 inhabitants, it being, as their Lordships were aware, one of the great evils and grievances of the present day, that there was not adequate provision made for the spiritual instruction of the people residing in large towns in this country. The parishioners apprehended that a recent Act of the Legislature, though wholly contrary to the wishes and intentions of the Legislature, would place them in a worse position than that in which they now were. In the third year of the reign of Her present Majesty, an Act was passed giving certain powers to the dean and canons of Manchester, until the erection of the see of Manchester; but the parishioners apprehended that that Act, the object of which was to make better provision for the application of the cathedral funds, would in fact do them an injury, because it would sanction and confirm the abuse of rectorial and parochial funds for the emolument of the chapter. He (Lord Stanley) had detained their Lordships at greater length than he had intended in stating the complaint of the petitioners; but he believed their Lordships would concur with him in thinking, that if such a state of things as he had described was warranted by law, the subject well deserved their serious consideration. He (Lord Stanley) could not conceive why the dean and canons of Manchester should be allowed to forget that they were also corporate rectors, and why they should be permitted to make use of their corporative character to deprive a large, an extensive, and a destitute population, of a provision of 5,000*l.* or 6,000*l.*, which was made by law for the cure of souls. The petitioners prayed their Lordships that, at or before the time at which the see of Manchester was erected, provision might be made for securing the application, in such manner as might be deemed expedient, of the whole income and revenues of the rectory for the efficient pastoral and ecclesiastical superintendence of the rectory of Manchester; and that such residence might be enforced as was required in benefices with the cure of souls.

LORD BROUGHAM observed, that this was a lamentable instance of compliance with the letter of the foundation, while its spirit was utterly disregarded; but those who had been accustomed to practise in courts of law were well aware that it was far from being a rare case, for it was indeed one of the most ordinary cases that occupied the attention of courts of equity. He must, at the same time, express his opinion that this was a very hard case; but it was one of those cases in which it was difficult to ascertain precisely what intention had prevailed in the mind of the founder, and in which they must take the rule of law to govern their decision. The common observation might indeed be applied in this instance, that if testators could rise from their graves, they would be astounded at nothing more than at the wills the law had made for them. He considered, that when a fit occasion occurred, some legislative remedy ought to be adopted for remedying the grievances of which the petitioners complained.

The MARQUESS of LANSDOWNE was not about to offer any opinion as to the construction to be put upon the charters by which the deanery and chapter of Manchester were constituted. He was, however, anxious to state that, in consequence of the fact of this petition having been prepared and becoming known in Manchester, and its also having been ascertained that his noble Friend opposite (Lord Stanley) had undertaken to present it to their Lordships, he (the Marquess of Lansdowne) had received a letter from the dean, or, as he was formerly called, the warden of Manchester, accompanied by a request that when the petition was presented, that letter might be read to the House. He (the Marquess of Lansdowne) was sure their Lordships would feel that it was only just to the distinguished gentleman and scholar who held the deanery of Manchester, and who undoubtedly considered that the petition involved a charge of neglect of duty against himself and the canons, that this communication should be laid before them. He hoped, therefore, that the House would indulge him while he read the statement to which he referred, and which was as follows:—

"My dear Lord—I have to-day received a letter from Lord Stanley, informing me that the churchwardens of Manchester have placed in his hands a petition to the House of Lords, of which he sends me a printed copy, which I enclose; printed by them, I apprehend, for the purpose of circulating freely its false representations and insinuations amongst the inhabitants of Manchester. This petition contains much irrelevant matter, in which I believe there are some inaccuracies; but I have not time, and it is not necessary, to investigate them. In the more important parts it quotes inaccurately from the charter, to suit its purposes, *residere et visitare*, instead of *residere et victitare*, which means to have both bed and board; and subsequently it states untruly that the dean and canons make a claim to certain exemptions, 'notwithstanding the oaths required by the existing charter binding them to perpetual residence, and not to seek dispensation from such oath.' Those words contain an untrue statement; the chapter are not bound to perpetual residence, but to reside, or furnish an account of their days of absence, and pay a fine to the poor for the number of days of absence exceeding the number stated in the charter. The dean and canons have not, and never have had, the cure of souls. It is vested by distinct words in the chaplains. The dean and canons do not set up any claim, though it is so asserted more than once in the petition. They simply enjoy the rights that have been enjoyed ever since the incorporation, which took place in the reign of Charles I. The words by which the cure of souls is vested in the chaplains are incontrovertible—*duo sint in perpetuum capelarii seu vicarii qui ægros visitabunt, sacramenta aliaque necessaria, et divina servitia in dicto collegio et in parochiâ de Manchester celebrabunt.* The dean and canons are not ordered, nor have authority, to visit at all; they are required to pay a fine to the poor when absent, 'so as not to be able, if requested, to visit a sick person, and perform other acts of piety and charity in the parish.' The petitioners speak of a claim to exemption from that which was never imposed; and they throw out a calumnious insinuation when they speak of 'the conduct of the dean and canons in the exercise of such claim.' I appeal from these three gentlemen to the voice of all Manchester, whether I or the canons have ever declined to visit, to comfort, or to help the afflicted and distressed. If the three gentlemen who signed this petition had visited one-hundredth part of the cellars of the destitute that have been visited, unsolicited, by me and by my family—if they had sued like me from door to door, even to exhaustion, for subscriptions to educate the poor—if they had raised that education from its former to the improved and progressive position which it now occupies—if they had sat day after day, as I have done, in committees for the relief and advantage of the indigent, they would not think themselves chargeable with that want of charity and piety which they are disposed to attribute to me and to my zealous and respectable fellow-workers, the canons of Manchester, to whose meritorious conduct towards the people of Manchester I beg leave to bear the most unflinching testimony. The next assertion in the petition is, that 'unless some legislative provision be made, 400,000 inhabitants will be left (except through the medium of the district churches) wholly destitute of ecclesiastical superintendence.' That is, that unless the cure of souls is fastened by a new law on the dean and canons, who have it not, the people of Manchester will have no pastors but those whom the law has assigned them, and whose number is so great, and daily increasing, that I cannot pretend hastily to count them! But the whole system of modern legislation, and of episcopal regulations, is directly opposed to the concurrent cure of souls. Sir Robert Peel's Act erects the new districts into parishes; and there has been even a disposition to allot subdistricts to special curates. The petitioners ask you to enact that, in addition to the two chaplains, the five members of the chapter also shall have concurrent cure of souls with the various rectors, incumbents, and curates of the whole extent of Manchester, over 400,000 people. They also put on a semblance of anxiety for the interests of the chaplains, who make no complaint, and have no cause of complaint, their income being comparatively better than that of the chapter. You will have seen that the income attributed by the petitioners to the chapter, falls very short of the sum with which the Legislature thought the chapter ought to be endowed, with a view to its important position in this great town. I am satisfied that the injustice and the impolicy of the petition will be apparent to the House of Lords; and without any fear I commit the future interests of the chapter to the impartial justice of Her Majesty's Ministers and of the Legislature. I beg leave to add, that the canons have exceeded, instead of shrinking from, the performance of their duties; that the dean is not only so by a late Act, but is by the charter warden or dean; and that it is not true, as asserted, that the chapter have now any obligations that would cease on the erection of a see of Manchester, nor have any grounds been laid for placing the chapter of Manchester on a different footing from that of any other cathedral town by a new and special enactment."

Their Lordships were aware that he (the Marquess of Lansdowne) was in no way connected with Manchester, and he was totally ignorant of the matters to which the petition presented by his noble Friend referred; but he could bear his testimony to the fact, that there was no individual who had contributed more zealously and earnestly to promote the cause of education in that great city, or who had done more to encourage the erection of schools, and to superintend their progress, than the gentleman who held the important situation of Dean of Manchester. He begged also to express his sincere regret at the absence of a distinguished Prelate, in whose diocese Manchester was situated, and who was thus prevented from giving any information to their Lordships on this subject. He could state, however, that the right rev. Prelate was exceedingly sorry that he was unable to attend the House that night, and that he in no way acquiesced in the statement of the petitioners.

LORD BROUGHAM hoped it would not be supposed that he had said one word against his honourable, reverend, and truly learned Friend, Mr. Herbert, the Dean of Manchester.

The LORD CHANCELLOR did not intend to enter into the question at any length, for their Lordships were not in possession of information enabling them to judge whether the members of this corporation had or had not performed those duties which, under the charter, they ought to discharge. This, however, was quite clear from the grant of incorporation—namely, that they were subject to certain pecuniary payments, which, when paid, relieved them from the obligation of perpetual residence. If they held their preferments subject to the terms of their charter, there was no difference between their title and that of most of the ecclesiastical corporations in the country; it was the same title, indeed, by which many of their Lordships were the impropriators of tithes. If so, the law must be altered before any change could be made in the holding under the charter. Their Lordships were aware that in early times, it was a common thing for religious houses, ecclesiastical corporations, and the dean and chapter of places, to become the rectors of parishes, subject to parochial duties and charges; but the rectorship was in most cases vested in the ecclesiastical corporations. In the time of Henry VIII., when monasteries and other religious houses were dissolved, the rectories and tithes held by these ecclesiastical bodies became the subject of purchase and grant, and those which remained vested in ecclesiastical bodies had remained as impropriated rectories to the present day. In the neighbourhood in which he (the Lord Chancellor) lived, there were four contiguous parishes in which a dean and chapter held the rectories. The income received by these ecclesiastical rectories in his own parish, could not be less than 800*l.* a year; and the sum they allowed to the clergyman who performed the duty was 40*l.* per annum. In other parishes throughout the country, he believed it was in about the same proportion. The result was, therefore, that discretion lay in the hands of the rectors, who were themselves members of the ecclesiastical corporation; and they had the law entirely on their side. The law had left the payment of the persons doing the duty to the discretion of these bodies. There were Acts of Parliament empowering the bishops to fix the salaries of the working clergy in proportion to the population; but Parliament had felt so sure that these deans and chapters would perform their duty in this respect, that they had not interfered to place the clergy of the parishes to which he alluded under the protection of its bishops. The matter was left to their discretion, which had been more or less liberally exercised. If the dean and canons of the collegiate church of Manchester conformed to the terms of the charter, respecting which he would express no opinion, they were as much entitled to the tithes as any one of their Lordships was entitled to his estates. If the petition appealed to the wants of the parish of Manchester, that was another question, and it might be proper that an Act of Parliament should be obtained to remedy the grievance complained of.

Lord CAMPBELL contended that there was a palpable distinction between the property in question and impropriate tithes; because the last were held in fee, without the ecclesiastical duties that belonged to the others. It was clear that this property was held as ecclesiastical property, and that it had ecclesiastical duties belonging to it; and he differed from his noble and learned Friend on the woolsack, who thought that it was not binding upon those who held such property to perform the duties which its possession demanded. There was a penalty attached of 1*s.* 4*d.* a day for the non-performance of those duties. That penalty showed that certain duties were imposed upon them which it was necessary that they should perform, and the payment of it did not free them from future responsibility. A man was not a good citizen who paid a penalty for the breach of the laws; but he who did the duty that the law enjoined. It appeared to him, that by the charter the duty of residence was imposed upon these persons, and that duty ought to be performed. He did not wish it to be understood that he thought the parties in question were not good and pious men, willing to perform all those duties which they considered properly devolved upon them.

The LORD CHANCELLOR said, that his noble and learned Friend must have been thinking of something else when he (the Lord Chancellor) addressed the House, for he had expressed no opinion whatever as to whether those persons who held the property were compelled by the terms of their charter to perform "duties." He had merely called the attention of their Lordships to the nature of the property.

Lord STANLEY had not attempted to offer any opinion on the legal part of the question, nor was it his intention to do so now. The noble and learned Lord on the woolsack said that this property was clearly the property of the rectors. No doubt the Act 3 and 4 Victoria, c. 114, gave a description of property which was applicable to rectorial uses; but it treated the rectory in question as one not having, as it were, the cure of souls, and as though the property in its possession was applicable to chapter purposes, with the view of increasing the funds of the curates, and appropriating to them and to their successors a certain amount of income from the general fund of the Ecclesiastical Commission. He would not go so far as to carp at the legal construction put upon the matter by his noble and learned Friends; but he must repeat his surprise that a body of Christians, churchmen, and he verily believed, conscientious churchmen, could be satisfied that they had in this instance performed the sacred duties which devolved on them. One part of the petitioners' statement remained totally without contradiction, which was this; that whereas, a sum of 5,000*l*, or 6,000*l*. of rectorial property was paid into the hands of the dean and chapter of Manchester, as rectors of the town of Manchester—that whereas it was the intention of the founders that these parties should reside, as shown by subjecting them to a penalty for non-residence equal to half the amount of their incomes at the time it was imposed—that whereas the charter required that they should visit the sick when called upon—yet that these parties contended that, according to the charter, they were not bound to reside, and that they fulfilled the duties which a moral sense of right imposed upon them, if they paid an annual fine for the violation of one of the provisions of the charter, while they were receiving the whole amount of the income, and appropriating it to their own use. He did not say that this was contrary to the law; but it was for their Lordships and for the public to say whether this ought to be the law. If so, then the inhabitants of a parish paying from 5,000*l*. to 6,000*l*. a year must be content to lose the benefit of the spiritual provision for which that sum was granted, and it must be paid to persons who did not recognise the rights, but who claimed to spend those funds where they pleased, and as they pleased. The parishioners of Manchester were alarmed lest these funds should be, under the new arrangements, liable to be diverted from rectorial purposes to chapter purposes; and there ought to be an understanding upon this subject. The parishioners of Manchester said these were rectorial, and not chapter funds. They had stated what they believed were the obvious intentions of the founder; and he was surprised the dean and chapter of Manchester had taken advantage of a technical expression to maintain the contrary.

The BISHOP of ST. ASAPH inquired where it was stated that the dean and chapter were bound to take upon themselves the cure of souls?

LORD STANLEY had no doubt, from the terms of the charter, that such was the intention, and that the course of the dean and chapter was at variance with the letter of the law.

Petition to lie on the Table.

PUBLIC WORKS (IRELAND).

LORD BROUGHAM said, he had seen a statement in one of the blue books from Captain Wynn, that two gentlemen of influence in the county of Clare had put farmers of theirs, renting to the amount of 50*l*. or 60*l*. per annum, upon the public works. That statement he observed had been denied; and he wished to know whether Government were in possession of any additional information on the subject?

The MARQUESS of LANSDOWNE said, he had read the statements which had been made respecting Captain Wynn, and he had also read the gallant officer's correspondence, which had appeared in the blue books; but he had not given any attention to particular acts of his. He (the noble Marquess) was at all events aware that Captain Wynn had discharged his duty to the Government and to the country with great zeal and courage; and the district in which he was placed had derived considerable advantage from his exertions.

LORD BROUGHAM wished to know if the Captain was still employed as an officer of the Government?

The MARQUESS of LANSDOWNE said, that he had every reason to believe that he was, as nothing to the contrary was stated in the last letters received by the Government from Ireland. He believed that nothing whatever had occurred to occasion the withdrawal of confidence from Captain Wynn.

LORD MONTEAGLE said, that he did not know Captain Wynn personally, but he could bear testimony to the efficient manner in which he and all other officers performed their duty in the south and west of Ireland.

SCOTCH DISTILLERIES.

The EARL of EGLINTOUN presented a petition from the Scotch distillers, praying to be heard before a Committee, against the reduction of the duties on rum. They wished for a countervailing duty that would prevent colonial spirits from having an advantage over our spirits. As it was impossible that alterations could be made in the Bill now before the other House, when it came to their Lordships' House, he trusted that the noble Lord opposite would endeavour to make such a change as would make it more palatable to the distillers.

The **Earl of CLARENDON** said, that if the noble Lord had given notice of his intention to enter into a discussion of this Bill, he should have been prepared to go more fully into it. There had not been the least wish or intention to bear hardly on the Scotch distillers. He had seen the gentlemen from whom the noble Lord had presented the petition, and they had also had an interview with his right hon. Friend the Chancellor of the Exchequer; and they were both of opinion that the Scotch distillers had no real cause of grievance, and that the 6*d*. protection, which would be afforded to them as well as to the English distillers, was what they were fairly entitled to, and no more.

Lord MONTEAGLE said, that he had a petition from the Irish distillers to the same effect as that presented by the noble Earl. Their case was harder than that of the Scotch distillers, because they had no drawback.

Earl GREY said, that the existence of the malt duty payable by Scotch distillers had not been overlooked. The Board of Excise had taken pains to calculate what, considering the amount of duty on malt and the restriction, was the burden that fell on Scotch distillers; and having made that calculation to the best of their power, they stated what they considered ought to be a corresponding duty to be imposed on colonial spirits.

Petitions to lie on the Table.

House adjourned.

HOUSE OF COMMONS,

Tuesday, February 9, 1847.

Minutes.] Public Bills.—1° Agricultural Tenant Right. *Reported.*— Destitute Persons (Ireland); Brewing from Sugar.

Petitions Presented. By Mr. Sidney Herbert, from Warminster, for Repeal of Duty on Attorneys' Certificates.—By Viscount Morpeth, from Bradford, in Favour of the Ten Hours Factory Bill.—By Mr. Hudson, from Sunderland, and Mr. Liddell, from Newcastle-upon-Tyne, against the Repeal of the Navigation Laws.—By Mr. Ricardo, from Manchester, for Inquiry into the Navigation Laws.

SALT TRADE (INDIA).

In answer to a question from an Hon. **Member**, as to there being any objection to produce any communications which might have taken place between the home authorities and the Governor General of India on the regulations affecting the trade in salt,

Sir J. C. HOBHOUSE said, he had to state to the House, that in consequence of the communications which had been just alluded to, the Court of Directors and the Board of Control had taken that important subject into their joint consideration, and had framed a despatch which went out to India, he thought, yesterday, and the purport of which he had no objection to mention. The purport of it was this: There had been certain regulations framed in 1841, and which the salt trade—the importers of salt—had thought impeded the importation of that article; and it was the opinion of the home authorities that the complaints made against those regulations were well founded. The consequence was that the despatch which had been framed and sent out to India the preceding day, had ordered the Governor General of India to cancel those regulations, and give to the importers of salt the advantages which they had had under the regulations of the year 1836, and from which they had been excluded in 1841.

RAILWAYS (INDIA).

Viscount MAHON inquired if the home authorities had received any reports or papers on the subject of railways from the Indian Government?

Sir J. C. HOBHOUSE said, that the report of the Commissioners sent out in June, 1845, to examine into the subject the noble Lord had alluded to, had transmitted their report. That report had arrived in England, and reached the Board of Control on the 4th of July, 1846. He was not sure whether his noble Friend had seen that report or not. It had not been made public; but if were any satisfaction to the noble Lord, or even of import to the public to know it, he had no objection to lay it upon the Table of the House. Since that report, the communications received were of very little importance, with the exception of one—namely, a minute of the Governor General of India on the subject of railways, which he had not the least objection to present to the House. If there were any additional communications with which the House might be furnished, he had no objection to lay them upon the Table.

Mr. HUME inquired if there were any objection to accompany those papers with copies of the resolutions or despatches which had been sent out relative to the terms offered to companies to construct railways?

Sir J. C. HOBHOUSE said, the Board of Control had agreed upon certain conditions upon which railroads were to be made; and until they knew whether companies would accept those terms or not, it was impossible to produce any communication upon the subject.

NAVIGATION ACTS.

Mr. RICARDO rose to move for a Select Committee to inquire into the operation and policy of the Navigation Laws. The hon. Member for Sunderland and his constituents laboured, he said, under a great mistake. With reference to the subject adverted to in the petitions which had just been presented, he did not mean to propose the repeal of the navigation laws. An Act was passed in 1651, called the Navigation Act, on which was founded the Act passed in the 12th year of the reign of Charles II., which, until the year 1822, was held to be the perfection of human wisdom, for although, in 1815, circumstances compelled the British Government to relax that law with respect to the United States of America and, shortly afterwards, in favour of Portugal, it was not until 1822 that any statesman was found bold enough to attack a statute which, up to that time, had been regarded as the greatest possible achievement of legislation. In the year mentioned, namely, 1822, Mr. Wallace brought forward five Acts, whose object was, in parliamentary language, to amend and explain various Acts which had been passed with respect to trade and navigation. Shortly afterwards—he thought it was in 1824—Mr. Huskisson brought forward and passed his famous Reciprocity Act, which enabled the King in Council to allow the entrance of foreign ships into our ports on the same terms as those on which British ships were permitted to enter foreign ports. Several trifling alterations were made, from time to time, in the navigation laws, the last of which was in reference to Hong-Kong, in 1845, to which it was unnecessary to allude more particularly. Having now shown the position in which the question of the navigation laws was, he once more begged the hon. Member for Sunderland to understand that he did not mean to propose the repeal of the Navigation Act—all he wanted was an inquiry into the operation of that Act. If the Government should agree to his Motion for a Committee, it would hardly be fair in hon. Gentlemen opposite to offer any opposition to the proposal; for in 1844, a Committee upon the same subject was appointed at the instance of those hon. Gentlemen, and two-thirds of the members of that Committee were Gentlemen who held opinions coincident with those of the hon. Member for Sunderland. The Committee of 1844 was appointed to inquire into the state and condition of the commercial marine of the country, and to take into consideration and report upon the best mode of encouraging and employing British shipping. The very words of the Motion certainly intimated some doubt as to the efficacy of the navigation laws in promoting the object for which they had been framed. That Committee, which was appointed on the Motion of one of the hon. Members of the city of London, agreed to a report, in which they stated "that they had entered upon the investigation of the important question referred to them, but that in consequence of the late period of the Session at which they had been appointed, they had not found it possible to complete their inquiry, or to come to a satisfactory report, and, therefore, they contented themselves with laying the evidence which they had taken before the House, and expressed a hope that the Committee would be reappointed at an earlier period of the ensuing Session." The Committee was accordingly reappointed at an earlier period of the following Session, and this was the report which they made to the House:—

> "Your Committee having been prevented by unforeseen circumstances from going fully into the inquiry referred to them, submit to the House the expediency of their being reappointed at an early period of the next Session."

The Committee, however, was not reappointed in the following Session; for what reason he could not tell. The Committee had acknowledged the important nature of the inquiry referred to them; and the very fact of such a Committee having been appointed implied the existence of some little doubt as to the efficacy of his navigation laws for their intended purpose: under these circumstances, it would be only fair in hon. Gentlemen opposite to allow some other person to take up the inquiry at the point at which they had left it, and endeavour to bring the important investigation to a conclusion. If, however, he should fail in obtaining acquiescence in his Motion from the appeal which he had made to the candour of hon. Gentlemen opposite, he should still, he thought, be able to show so much of evil to the manufacturer and merchant of this country—so much of oppression to our colonial fellow-subjects from the operation of the navigation laws—that he thought he had a right to demand from the justice of the House the appointment of the Committee for which he was about to move. It would be easy to make out the case of injustice and oppression from the evidence taken before the Committees of 1844 and 1845, which had been reported to the House. The first witness they had called was Mr. Somes, afterwards a Member of that House, and whose untimely loss they all so much regretted. That gentleman, it was well known, went so far as to demand a tax upon colonial shipping. In answer to a question put to him by the Committee, he said, "some interests might profit by cheap carrying, but that it would ruin important interests." He was then asked by the hon. Member for Gateshead whether it were not an advantage to our merchants to have goods brought from India at 3*l.* instead of 4*l.* per ton? To which he replied, "Yes, looking at it in a commercial point of view; but I think we ought to keep our mercantile marine." Now, the witness admitted a fact which must be obvious to everybody, that it was a greater advantage to our merchants to pay 1,500*l.* for freight of a vessel of 500 tons, than 2,000*l.* It was quite clear the cost of the production of an article was not its cost when it left the factory, but the amount expended upon it when it arrived at the market. And here we were spending millions on millions on our internal communication; Parliament was looking with the utmost jealousy lest we should be charged a halfpenny or a penny too much for our internal transit; yet, when the goods arrived in dock we found a law had been enacted which had for its object to increase the cost of their transport over by far the larger portion of their journey. The next witness called was Mr. G. F. Young, who also advocated a tax upon colonial shipping. He said he

> —"considered the whole system of the navigation laws as relating more to the encouragement of our maritime commerce than any other object, and that many sacrifices of pecuniary interests ought to be made for it."

In answer to the noble Lord the Member for Liverpool, he also said—

> "I have no doubt that private interests should be sacrificed for the general interests of the country. If the Legislature should decide that it was no longer necessary to keep up the navigation laws as a means of national security, no doubt the consumers of foreign articles could purchase at a cheaper rate, since this would be the natural consequence of admitting imports in the ships of foreign nations."

He might go on through the whole book; but it must be evident that, by every ton of shipping driven from our ports, we lost the benefit of a sale of an equal value of our merchandise; and that, thereby, we deprived our manufacturers of profits, and our workmen of wages, as well as the Government of revenue to that amount. The importer and his ship ought to be like the pedlar and his pack, travelling from place to place, buying of all who might find it profitable to sell, and selling to all who might find it convenient to buy; and the more we obstructed him, whether by fixing him to a particular place, or restricting him to a particular means of conveyance, the more we crippled his profits and deprived him of the advantages which would otherwise accrue from his industry. If the Spaniards wanted earthenware, the French sugar, and we wine; why on earth should we forbid the natural course of the transaction? The Spaniard would take in a cargo of sugar at Cuba, which he would deliver at a French port, and take in wine for us; but we had so arranged that when he arrived at one of our ports he would be met by a custom-house officer, who would tell him that he could not be permitted to land his cargo. "Why," the Spaniard would say, "I understood you wanted wine." "So we do," the officer would reply. "Then," the Spaniard would say, "I will exchange my wine for your earthenware." "That will not do; it must be brought by Frenchmen in a French ship." "But the French do not want your earthenware." "We cannot help that; we must not let you violate our navigation laws;" and then the officer would entertain the poor Spaniard with some pompous declamation about "the great bulwarks of our country," "the wooden walls of Old England," and other patriotic topics. But the Spaniard would ask whether there was no way in which he could get the wine into England; and he would be told, "Yes, if you take it to Spain, land it, and reship it, you may bring it here, and we will be glad to take it from you." Could anything be more absurd than such a system? A case almost parallel to that which he had stated to the House, was given in evidence before the Committee of 1844. A merchant at Marseilles, to whom some hides from America had been consigned, sent them for sale to Rotterdam; but not meeting with a market there, they were returned to Marseilles. The merchant then, supposing, perhaps, that the merchandise had been sufficiently naturalized, sent it to Liverpool, where it was seized as American produce imported in a French bottom. The goods were subsequently released upon petition; but only on condition that they should be sent back to New York. Thus it was that we destroyed that which was usually deemed the most profitable part of commerce, namely, the indirect, or triangular trade, as it was called. If the direct trade were more profitable, we did not want Acts of Parliament to encourage it—into that would naturally flow the capital of our merchants and shipowners; but if the indirect trade were the most advantageous, was it expedient to pass laws to obstruct it? It was impossible to create trade by laws. No code of laws which human wisdom could devise could operate as well as the natural laws which regulated trade and commerce; and every attempt to interfere with the natural course of things by legislative means, was certain to produce waste and extravagance and inconveniences of various kinds. Because we would not let things take their natural course, we passed the Reciprocity Act, as a sort of compromise; and what had been the consequence? We had actually incurred an expense of 600,000*l.*, because we had found it necessary to exempt foreign shipping from the payment of certain dues to which our own vessels were subjected. After all, the obligations imposed by the navigation laws were evaded in so many instances, that they operated more injuriously to the British merchant than to his foreign competitor. He understood, from the answer which his right hon. Friend the Vice-President of the Board of Trade gave to a question he had put to him on a former evening, that refined sugar would be admitted into this country as a manufactured article in vessels of the countries in which it might be refined. That decision appeared to rest on rational grounds. Refined sugar was certainly as much a manufactured article as cotton yarn; and as long as the one was admitted in that character, it would be absurd to exclude the other. But, then, what became of the navigation laws? As regarded the importation of sugar, they would be a complete nullity. So flour might be manufactured of American grain—cigars of Havannah tobacco—quinine of Peruvian bark; and they might all be imported into this country in the ships of the country whence imported. Thus, after the lapse of 200 years, a flaw is discovered in the code which we had substituted for the natural laws which regulate commerce: you have ordained that no goods, the produce of Asia, Africa, or America, shall be imported into this country in other than British ships or ships of the countries where produced; but you find that the diplomatist is able to steer a ship through the Act of Parliament, and the result is, that the navigation laws, instead of securing to British shipowners a greater proportion of the carrying trade than, in the natural course of things, they could hope to obtain, actually operated as a direct encouragement to the foreign manufacturer in his competition with our own. These were collateral points; but the real object of the Navigation Act, call it by what name they pleased—the *Charta Maritima*, or any other magnificent title—was to protect British shipowners, in other words, to raise freights unnaturally. If it did not act in that way, it would not operate at all. Freights varied in proportion to the length of a voyage, being less for a long than a short voyage; but he would suppose that the effect of the Navigation Act was to raise freights only 10*s.* per ton on an average. Now, what was the amount of tonnage affected? In 1843, 7,181,789 tons of British tonnage were employed in the foreign carrying trade; and, therefore, assuming that the freights were raised 10*s.* per ton by the operation of the navigation laws, this country actually paid a tax of 3,590,394*l.* for the protection of shipping. In 1845, the amount of British tonnage similarly employed was 8,546,090, which showed that the people, in that year, had a tax of not less than 4,273,045*l.* for the protection of shipping. He did not say that the law actually raised the freight 10*s.* a ton; but if it was operative at all it could only be so by raising the freight; and at 10*s.* a ton that would amount to a tax of more than 4,000,000*l.* on this country. But these evils were not peculiar to this country. They were felt equally by the colonies, and they had some peculiar to themselves; and he thought he could make out a case for them also. He recollected being struck by what he read on the discussion when Mr. Huskisson made his statement on the shipping interest. One of the stanchest advocates of that interest, Mr. Marryat, said, he understood that a compact had been entered into between this country and the colonies, by which we undertook to give them a preference in our market for their produce, they in their turn undertaking to pay us for the monopoly granted to them by granting us a monopoly in transporting their produce. And he went on to say that if we touched the navigation law, that monopoly must go; but that if the monopoly was to go, the navigation laws ought to go first. The Legislature, however, began at the wrong end, for it took away the monopoly enjoyed by the colonist, about the value of which, to him, there was a strong question, while it retained that monopoly derived through the navigation laws, which, if it were of value at all, could only be so in proportion as it injured the colonies for the benefit of the mother country. The colonists, under these circumstances, spoke only the truth in their memorial of July last, when they stated that these laws were upheld by the mother country, now that protection was almost altogether removed from their produce, against their wishes and against their interests. He could not perceive upon what principle of justice, or of sound policy, the Legislature could justify so arbitrary an interference with the independent commerce of the mother country. The colonists said that trade should be as free in shipping as it was now in sugar; and they were right. To withhold it was to inflict an injustice and an injury upon them. The demand for freights in the West Indies was on the increase, because a large proportion of the ships that went to those colonies heretofore now went to the Brazils, to import into England the slave-produced sugar of that country, and also went to other slaveholding countries for a like purpose. The supply of shipping in the colonies was therefore decreased, and freights raised just at the moment that we had introduced them to a formidable rivalry. And as the navigation laws prevented the employment of foreign ships, the colonists were thus unjustly treated and severely injured. Let him remind the House that the system of isolating colonies from the rest of the world, for the benefit of the parent State—tried in various forms and under various pretexts, in none more specious or more effective than the navigation laws—was one that had lost Brazil to Portugal; left only the island of Java to Holland; caused the secession of the United States of America from England; and, of all her magnificent colonial empire, left Spain with Cuba and the Philippine islands. Could any ground of political expediency, or any national advantage, be shown to justify the retention of these laws? He asked the question fearlessly, and he knew how he would be answered. No doubt the authority of Adam Smith would be adduced against him, and that great writer's opinions would be quoted in favour of the navigation laws. ["Hear, hear!"] To that cheer he would reply, without fear of contradiction, that Adam Smith in that instance departed from his constant practice—that was to say, he made an assertion without bringing forward an argument to support it. In fact, the argument which preceded the assertion went against the assertion; and he was quite content that hon. Gentlemen who differed from him on this point should take the assertion, if they would only give him the argument. It would be answered likewise that as the mercantile marine was the nursery of the defensive navy of the country, and as the defensive navy was the safeguard of the realm, it would not do to disturb it. Now, it would save much trouble if he began this part of his case by making some admissions; and he would accordingly admit that the defensive navy was of the utmost importance to the welfare of this country, and that the commercial marine was the nucleus and nursery of that branch of the public service, inasmuch as it provided naturally those elements which could only be artificially maintained by a non-maritime country. But while he admitted these two propositions, he most distinctly and emphatically denied the inference from them, that the way to encourage the commercial navy was to place on the commerce of the country restriction, impediment, and obstruction. Restriction, he maintained, was a drag and an impediment. Restriction meant scarcity, and scarcity meant inferiority: and to a most successful state of inferiority had our maritime code conducted us. This was clearly shown in the case of the American trade. Merchants engaged in making shipments uniformly advised that they should be made in American bottoms, if possible, even though the rates were a little higher than the freights of English vessels; and constantly protested against the employment of the latter. And this was not the case with America only, but with other countries; yet England had the carrying trade of no other country, the system of protection established by the navigation laws having reduced it to outtrade alone. Well, what was the consequence of the navigation laws? Certainly not the superiority of English shipping—a fact which he would undertake to prove, if a Committee was granted him for the purpose. He would also undertake to prove that the British shipbuilder was quite capable of protecting himself in any competition which might ensue upon the abandonment of these laws. The next greatest navy in the world to that of England was the mercantile navy of the United States of North America. The tonnage of the United States was about two and a half millions. Let them see what we had to fear from this competition. It might be said the United States had a great advantage over England in the matter of timber, and that the shipbuilders would therefore be on a better footing than the English shipbuilders; but he was not quite clear on that point; and, at all events, he should like to go before a Committee to elicit the facts of the case. As far, however, as oak and teak were a question, the United States had no advantage over England; nor had they any advantage even in the matter of wages for labour. In Sunderland and the outports of England the shipwrights' wages ranged from 3*s.* 6*d.* to 4*s.* a day; at present, perhaps, they were rather higher, in consequence of the high freights; but as the demand extended to America also, the rise was proportional in that country. In London, owing to a combination caused by the monopoly of the navigation laws, shipwrights' wages were 6*s.* a day. But they were 1½ dollars in the United States, or 7*s.* a day on the average. In some cases they were two dollars; but he would take the average of 7*s.* as the fact. That was, however, 1*s.* a day higher than the highest wages in England, and nearly double the wages paid in Sunderland and the outports. With respect, however, to the other materials for shipbuilding, iron, copper, cordage, &c., they were cheaper in this country than in the United States. What, then, was the cause of all the outcry for protection against the foreign shipbuilders, as if the English shipbuilder had no means and no power to protect himself? If the assumed expense of building a ship was taken to be the actual expense, there would be no ships built in London at all under the present circumstances; for it was stated by Mr. Somes that the same description of ships would cost from 5*l.* to 6*l.* a ton more in London, than it would in Sunderland; so that there was as much difference between the cost of a ship built in London, and of a ship built in Sunderland, as there was between a ship built in Sunderland, and a ship built in New Brunswick. He could not, however, admit the calculation at so much per ton in shipbuilding; he should take the whole ship as it stood, and look at the actual value as the only criterion. But as respected those places where ships were built cheaper and better than in England, it was necessary, in that point of view even, to make inquiry why such should be the case, which would in itself be almost a sufficient ground for the appointment of a Committee. Timber, cordage, copper, and all other materials which went to the construction of a ship, were permitted to come into this country; but the moment they were put together in the shape of a ship, then they were prohibited. Every part of a ship was admissible, but the ship itself was not; she could not be bought or used by a British merchant. What was the reason for this? Why, after all, it came to a protection for British carpenters. If a foreign ship was taken in time of war, the Government and the Legislature were proud of it, and it was at once put into commission as a member of the military navy of the country. A large crew was put on board of it: she was sent out to fight our battles. He, however, never knew that these crews had been contaminated because the ship was not British-built; nor that the ship itself was less effective against the enemies of England. Another objection with which he would no doubt be met, was the expense of navigating English ships as compared with foreign. It was asserted that the foreign ships were navigated much cheaper than the English; because their crews—composed, the best of them, of Swedes and Danes—could live, it was said, upon biscuit and oil; while their wages, at the same time, were much less than those of the English sailor. If that was the case—if Danes and Swedes, who were not prohibited to the shipowners of the United States, were as effective as they were represented to be—how came it that half the American navy was manned by Englishmen, who received higher wages than they did in their own country? How was it, even, that the English shipowners had never availed themselves of the permission accorded by these very navigation laws to employ one-fourth of their crews, foreigners, natives of any country with which we might be at peace—alive as they were to their own interests? There were Danes and Swedes enough to be brought to England, if they were wanted. Why, then, was there such an outcry on the subject of cheap navigation, when we did not employ even the number of foreigners permitted? If the Committee which he asked for were granted him, he (Mr. Ricardo) would undertake to prove all these facts; and also to prove that the British shipowner, as well as the British seaman, needed no protection. He would show the Committee, on the contrary, that they were both ready to compete with any nation, and that, in building ships, as in spinning cotton, England was a match for the whole world. He would next advert to a point, in reference to which he begged the indulgence of the House—namely, statistical facts in support of his arguments. He thought it right to judge by the past, how to legislate for the future. He held in his hand a statement, showing the number and tonnage of shipping entered and cleared from the ports of the United Kingdom, distinguishing British from foreign, and showing the centesimal proportions which the British and foreign tonnage bore to each other in the year 1814 (the last year of the war, when British ports were not generally accessible to foreign vessels, and when the Navigation Act was in full force); in 1824, the year of reciprocity treaties; and in 1845, after twenty-two reciprocity treaties had been carried out, and twenty-seven were in operation, which was as follows:—

INWARDS.

YEARS.	BRITISH		FOREIGN		CENTES. PROP.	
	SHIPS.	TONS.	SHIPS.	TONS.	BRIT.	FOREIGN.
1814	8,975	1,290,248	5,286	599,287	68.28	31.72
1824	11,733	1,797,320	5,653	759,541	70.29	29.71
1845	21,001	4,310,639	11,651	1,735,079	71.23	28.77

OUTWARDS.

1814	8,620	1,271,952	4,622	602,941	67.84	32.16
1824	10,157	1,657,533	5,026	746,707	68.94	31.06
1845	20,231	4,235,451	12,296	1,790,136	70.22	29.78

The excess of British over foreign shipping stated in tons was, therefore, as under:—

	INWARDS.	OUTWARDS.
1814	690,961	669,011
1824	1,037,779	910,826
1845	2,575,560	2,439,315

That was to say, it was in 1845 more than double what it was in 1824; and more than four times what it was in 1814. All this in consequence of the relaxation that had been intermediately made in the restrictions which pressed upon the commerce of the country as well as in the navigation laws. He had another statement which he should wish to read to the House, and he hoped he might be permitted to do so; it was a subject which had not been inquired into for the last twenty years; and deserved, therefore, an accurate investigation. It related to the protected and unprotected tonnage, as he should term them; the protected tonnage being the British and colonial vessels engaged in the colonial trade; the unprotected, the British vessels engaged in foreign trade on fair and open competition; and the periods which he should take would be the two of 1826, when protection was at its height; and 1844, when it had been greatly relaxed in this country:—

BRITISH TONNAGE.

	Inwards.	Outwards.
1826 Protected tons...	939,321	839,558
— Unprotected......	1,011,309	897,867
	1,950,630	1,737,425
1844 Protected	1,460,882	1,551,251
— Unprotected......	2,186,581	2,301,571
	3,647,463	3,852,822

1826 Amount protected inwards and outwards	1,778,879
1844 Amount protected inwards and outwards	3,012,133
Increase in 1844, 1,233,254; or 69.32 per cent.	
1826 Amount unprotected inwards and outwards..........................	1,909,176
1844 Amount unprotected inwards and outwards..........................	4,448,152
Increase in 1844, 2,578,976; or 135.07 per cent;	

which was just double the increase of the protected tonnage. These facts spoke for themselves, and showed by the case made out that protection had not answered. There were other and far surer means of encouraging our shipping. It was said that the commercial marine was the nursery of the defensive navy; but what was the nursery of the commercial marine? It was commerce—commerce was the parent. Nourish the parent, and the child would flourish; but if the parent was starved, the child could not be expected to continue in health, and both would fail. If the House only looked for a moment at the effects of relaxation, as evidenced by the measures of the right hon. Baronet opposite, it would be surprised to see how sensitive the shipping interest of this country was to improvements in that direction. He would read to the House an abstract of the state of the shipping trade in reference to those relaxations, as they affected two or three branches of the commerce of the country. And, first, with respect to the timber trade:—

> "In 1843, the year before the reduction of the duties on timber, there were employed in the timber trade with the North American colonies 1841 ships, representing 689,731 tons, whereas in 1845, the year after the reduction, there were employed in the same trade 2,608 ships, representing 964,276 tons."

So that in the next year the number was nearly doubled, because restriction had been removed. Then, again, with respect to the Chinese trade. This was the past and present position of it as regarded the shipping interest:—

Year.	Ships.	Tons.
1835	100	56,645
1845	207	86,193

He would next call attention to the condition of the foreign trade; and he should therefore read to the House an account of the number and tonnage of British vessels employed in the foreign trade of the United Kingdom in the nine months ended the 10th of October, in the years 1844 and 1846:—

Year.	Ships.	Tons.
1844	22,266	4,352,821
1846	24,377	5,123,631

Increase in 1846—2,111 ships, 771,810 tons.

There was an increase in the foreign and colonial trade in the five years ending 1839 of 1,503,673 tons; and in the five years ending 1845, of 2,055,605 tons; being 551,992 tons greater comparative increase in the last five than in the first five years. He had now done with figures. If he had in the slightest degree raised a doubt in the mind of any hon. Gentleman upon the subject—if he had shown that injury was inflicted upon the merchants and manufacturers of this country by the operation of the navigation laws—if he had made out, as he hoped he had, the injustice of those laws—if he had revived a doubt even of the beneficial character of these laws to British shipping—then he maintained that the House was bound to institute an inquiry into the case, and either to refute his facts, or to give him an opportunity of substantiating them. He had endeavoured to state his case fairly, with temper and moderation; and he hoped he should be met in a similar spirit. The hon. Member concluded by submitting his Motion to the House.

Mr. MILNER GIBSON: The hon. Member who had just sat down had laid before the House a question of much interest, and in doing so had called their attention to the history and effects of the Acts of Navigation, into which he proposed to institute an inquiry before a Committee of that House. His hon. Friend had prefaced his Motion by questioning the policy of the navigation laws, and pointed out many evident anomalies in the working of those laws; but the Motion which he had placed in their hands did not call for anything more than their assent to the proposition that there was at least a case for inquiry, and did not commit any hon. Member who supported the proposal to those measures which his hon. Friend might, in his own mind, think best suited for the settlement of the question. If the Government, therefore, gave their consent to the appointment of a Committee, it appeared to him that they would be acting in strict concordance with the recommendation of the Committee appointed in 1844, which was moved for by the hon. Member for London, and the object of which was precisely the same as that of the hon. Member (Mr. Ricardo) in calling for the present inquiry. The subject for reference to that Committee was, that they should inquire into the means of extending and increasing the employment of British ships and seamen. The navigation law was a law which professed to be for the encouragement of British ships and navigation; and, therefore, an inquiry into the navigation laws would be an inquiry of a similar character to that of the Committee of the hon. Member for London. In point of fact, considerable evidence on the navigation laws had been taken in that Committee; and the report it made was, that they were unable, owing to unforeseen circumstances, to conclude their inquiry, and recommended that they should be appointed to sit again. He thought, therefore, that if the House agreed to this proposal, it would be but continuing a train of very useful inquiry which it had already commenced. It must have occurred to the minds of most hon. Members, that, after the great commercial changes which had taken place during the last few years, the necessity would arise for inquiry into the navigation law, which was in itself a regulation of our trade with foreign countries. As the course of our trade had been already changed by the commercial measures adopted by the British Parliament — as the reciprocity treaties, to which the hon. Member alluded, had been forced on this country by the necessity of the times— and, as a change had taken place in the commercial relations between England and foreign countries, this inquiry was desirable. It appeared to him that since they had changed most of their trading relations with those countries—since they had abolished the corn laws, and had provided for the equalisation of the sugar duties—and, since in these and other material points considerable changes in their relations with foreign countries had been made—it was natural to suppose, that the same circumstances which necessitated reciprocity treaties in former times, might prevail at present; and that it was proper, as it appeared to Her Majesty's Government, to appoint a Committee for the purpose of inquiring into the policy of the laws to which their attention had been called. The hon. Member proposed that an impartial Committee should be appointed, and that the Members should be selected with a view to the investigation of the truth, and not to make out a case for those with whom he acted—the supporters of an opposite policy to that of hon. Gentlemen at the other side of the House. On the contrary, he was sure they would not see anything but a desire on the part of the Government that this Committee should proceed to its investigation as impartially as possible, and that it should be composed of Gentlemen of that position and talent which entitled them to the confidence of the House. He did not think it necessary to prejudge the question by going into the arguments as to the policy of the navigation laws. That he would leave for some future time, in case the Committee should think proper to recommend legislative measures for their improvement. He would not trespass further on the time of the House, but conclude by recommending, on the part of the Government, that the Committee moved for by the hon. Member for Stoke-upon-Trent should be acceded to.

MR. H. T. LIDDELL had listened with extreme attention to the speech of the hon. Member introducing the Motion, and he was glad that the right hon. Gentleman the Vice President of the Board of Trade had been so explicit, inasmuch as it was a matter of the greatest importance, not only to that (the Opposition) side of the House, but to the country at large, to know what course Her Majesty's Government proposed to take on this subject. He begged for the indulgence of the House while he expressed his own sentiments in regard to those commercial laws which were connected with the highest and best interests of Great Britain. The hon. Gentleman who made the Motion, had told them, for their comfort, that he had no intention to repeal the navigation laws; but he (Mr. Liddell) must acknowledge that he looked with suspicion on the quarter whence the attack was directed. The hon. Member represented a central and highly commercial district of the kingdom, far apart, however, from the bustle of seaports, from the agitation of the waves, and the rocking of the masts of those vessels which were alike the pride and the defence of the nation; and it was only natural to suppose that the hon. Gentleman would be inclined to pursue a path leading more directly to the advancement of those interests of which he was the champion, rather than to the profit of that other and more important class whose well-being he (Mr. Liddell) felt himself bound to consider. The hon. Member had merely asked for an inquiry; but the object of his speech had been, not so much to suggest an investigation into the navigation laws, as to point out the hardships to which commerce was subjected, and those alterations by which, on a superficial examination, that commerce would be benefited. The hon. Member had thought to forestall objections by admitting the well-known sentence of Adam Smith in favour of the navigation laws to be against his case; but before he (Mr. Liddell) resumed his seat, he hoped to be able, by reference to other and equally valuable authorities, to show that they took the correct line of conduct in resisting the appointment of a Committee, from which they anticipated a report would be obtained seriously adverse to the great interests of commercial navigation. Allusion had been made both by the hon. Gentleman who first addressed the House, and by the right hon. Gentleman the Vice President of the Board of Trade, to the Committee of 1844; and it had been argued, because the labours of that Committee were not brought to a satisfactory conclusion, that the object with which it had set out, was similar to the object now entertained in moving for this Committee. He would explain to the House the reason why, in the case spoken of, it had not been possible to come to a satisfactory conclusion, and how wide was the difference between the aim of that Committee and the object of the hon. Gentleman (Mr. Ricardo). It was now twenty years since he (Mr. Liddell) had first stood up in the House to advocate the cause of the shipowners of England. It was then, and after the passing of the reciprocity treaties, that the shipowners first began to discover the unequal competition to which they had been exposed; it was then that they first began to complain of the injuries which had been inflicted on them. Those shipowners intrusted their case to General Gascoigne, then the representative of Liverpool. That gallant Officer first asked for an inquiry into their claims. The House refused the inquiry, and denied the Committee; and since that period, the British shipowner had never ceased to complain of the evil and mischievous effects of the reciprocity treaties. Again and again, through various advocates, had the shipowners since appealed to the House for liberty to state before an impartial Committee the hardships which they were compelled to endure. Upon repeated occasions that request had been rejected. But, after twenty years' experience of the treaties, the shipowners had never reached so low an ebb of depression as in the year 1843; and then it was at length, upon the Motion of the hon. Member for the city of London, that Mr. Gladstone, at that day the President of the Board of Trade, consented with a good grace to the formation and appointment of the required Committee. That Committee was appointed, and went industriously into a consideration of the various topics embraced in their inquiry. Now, what was it that prevented a satisfactory termination to their labours? It sat with diligence through the whole of the Session of 1844; at the end of that Session, as they had not concluded their inquiry, they brought up that short report which the hon. Member had quoted to the House. The Committee was reappointed in the Session of 1845; and at about that date, the first time for a considerable period, a gleam of prosperity having manifested itself to the shipping interests, the necessity of tracing further the causes of the extreme depression previously existing was obviated, and the original object was considerably modified. Another cause of the impediments presented to the progress of the Committee was to be found in the non-attendance of the chairman, the Member for the city of London, whose absence had been occasioned by a domestic affliction of a very melancholy character. It was then felt that much valuable evidence had notwithstanding been elicited; that great light had been thrown on the question; and, from a sentiment of delicacy, suggested by the unavoidable absence of the hon. chairman, and in consideration also of the better prospects which were opening up to the shipping interests, it was not thought necessary to reassemble in the ensuing Session. Hence that meagre report which had been read to the House. But the object of that Committee was not the object of the hon. Gentleman. It had been before shown by the remarks of the hon. Member for Dumfries (Mr. Ewart), and the hon. Member for Montrose (Mr. Hume), that the object now entertained really was to obtain a repeal of the navigation laws. He (Mr. Liddell) was, for one, prepared to resist such a proposal. The hon. Member had produced a few cases of the hardships endured by merchants, in consequence of the existing laws; but he doubted if these hardships had arisen to any extent, and if they had, it was the business of the merchant to conform to the established regulations. The hon. Member, again, had denied that a commercial navy was fostered by a system of protection; and he had compared the wages paid to shipwrights in England, the expenses of navigating vessels when supplied from England, with the state of things in the United States. Now, why did not the hon. Member go to the Baltic ports for a comparison? And when alluding to the authority of Mr. Huskisson on this head, why did the hon. Member not give those portions of the remarks of Mr. Huskisson which went directly against his own case? In 1826, when stating the grounds on which he made certain recommendations in relation to the reciprocity treaties, Mr. Huskisson said—

> "The object of the navigation laws was twofold: first, to create and maintain the great commercial marine of this country for the purposes of national defence; and, secondly—an object not less important in the eyes of statesmen—to prevent any one other nation from engrossing too large a proportion of the navigation of the world."

Mr. Huskisson further said, that in those two branches of our maritime system, the fisheries and the coasting trade, there appeared to be no motive for alteration, and that the laws in this respect must remain unchanged, so long as we sought to uphold our great commercial marine. In reference to the European trade, the same authority declared that the altered state of the world compelled England to enter into some new treaties; that, in so far as exclusion was within their reach, they were bound to grant and enforce a monopoly to the British shipowner—not for his especial advantage, but for the public interest; that the commercial marine was the foundation of their naval power, and that the maintenance of this power was the paramount duty of all who administered affairs. It was his (Mr. Liddell's) decided opinion, however, that the reciprocity treaties had ever been distasteful to the British shipowner; it was always admitted that they had suffered in the carrying trade with other countries from unequal competition, although it was now too late to think of giving up those treaties, or of altering that policy to which the country had pledged itself. When the proposition for the temporary suspension of the navigation laws was submitted by Her Majesty's Government, for the purpose of affording an immediate relief to the people of Ireland, and when that proposition was cordially assented to on the part of the shipowners, and on the part of hon. Members on that side of the House, it was little supposed that this would be made a peg on which to hang the Motion of the hon. Gentleman. He would ask the noble Lord (Lord J. Russell) what could he gain by the appointment of the Committee? The navigation laws, in reference to grain and bread stuffs, were already suspended until the 1st of September next. They had thus done all they could in the way of temporary relief, by increasing the facilities for the transport of corn; and, as they were now in the sixth year of the present Parliament, and, he might say, on the eve of a general election, it was not advisable at such a time to enter upon an inquiry which would be without profit or result. Was it worth while, at the suggestion of an individual Member of that House, to enter into this large and complicated inquiry, involving such enormous interests, exciting agitation and feelings of dismay, and want of confidence in every seaport of the empire? Would it not be wise in the noble Lord to abstain from such an inquiry at the present moment? Surely there was enough in the exigencies of other parts of the empire at the present time to take up the attention of Her Majesty's Ministers and the House, without entering upon a question that must lead to a disturbance of the interests on which rested the great bulwarks of our national power. He was sure that it would be more satisfactory to the feelings of the noble Lord, as it would be more satisfactory to the country at large, if this inquiry was postponed till the meeting of a new Parliament. If it should then appear that there was a necessity for this inquiry—if it should appear to the Minister of the Crown that such an inquiry would be of advantage to the commerce of the country, then it would be more satisfactory if the Government came forward and stated in what particulars they considered these navigation laws susceptible of modification, and asked for a Committee from the House, than to take the course now proposed by the hon. Gentleman opposite. Though on the present occasion he would much rather confine himself to generalities than go into details on this question, still, as the hon. Gentleman had gone so much into detail, he trusted that the House would excuse him if, to some extent, he attempted to follow his example. Regarding the comparison of the expense of British and foreign ships, it suited the case of the hon. Gentleman to compare those expenses with the expenses of the United States alone; but why not look to the Baltic States, with the trade of which the whole of the eastern parts of the island were brought into direct competition? They found in the evidence taken before a Committee of that House, instituting a comparison between the relative cost of a British and a Prussian ship, that the navigating a three months' voyage, in a vessel, say of 300 tons, cost a British shipowner 169*l.* 10*s.*; while it cost a foreigner only 81*l.* 14*s.*; that the victualling of the former cost 93*l.*, that of the latter 32*l.* They found that the cost of building in the foreign port was 5*l.* 6*s.* a ton; while in the port of Sunderland it cost the British builder the average sum of 10*l.* a ton, and in the Thames 16*l.* a ton; and, for first-class vessels, he believed 21*l.* and 22*l.* a ton, before they were complete for a voyage. In the Thames the wages of workmen were stated at 6*s.* a day; in the dockyards, in the outports, 4*s.* 6*d.* a day; while, in France, they were only a franc and a half a day; and in the Baltic ports at a lower ratio still. But the hon. Gentleman, by his interference, would desire to affect this state of things, and reduce to the same level the wages of workmen here and on the Continent. The question of wages indicated the difference between a rich country and a poor one; and far distant be the day when there would, in this country, be a reduction of wages to the continental level! With the dogmas of political economy held by the hon. Gentleman, he only looked to the profits of trade, instead of looking to the advantage of the working classes, which formed a part of the great principle of protection they (the protectionists) were endeavouring to the utmost of their power to uphold. Let the House remember the well-established dogma of the economists, that wages and profits vary in an inverse ratio. He would now call the attention of the House to a comparative statement of the tonnage of this country as compared with foreign countries at various periods, going back as far as the year 1821. In a return cited by Mr. Huskisson of the number of British and foreign ships which passed the Sound in 1821, and the four following years, these are the numbers :—

Years.	No. of British Ships.	No. of Ships of all other nations.
1821	2,819	6,358
1822	3,097	5,336
1823	3,016	6,187
1824	3,540	6,978
1825	5,186	7,974

Showing a proportion of more than one-third in favour of British vessels in the first year, and in the last of nearly two-fifths. He would now state the number of British vessels which passed the Sound in the years 1835, 1836, and 1837, and the years 1842, 1843, and 1844, with the proportion to the total number during these years :—

	Brit. Ships.	Tons.	Total Ships.	Tons.
1835	2,472	470,727	10,255	1,594,202
1836	3,188	605,889	11,916	1,882,463
1837	3,417	655,447	13,102	2,033,706
1842	3,519	613,809	13,957	2,117,388
1843	3,515	633,952	14,945	2,159,069
1844	4,424	818,440	17,332	2,521,098

Proportion of British Ships to total :—

1835	0·295	1842	0·290
1836	0·322	1843	0·293
1837	0·322	1844	0·324

Being in every year less than one-third of British, compared with the whole amount of foreign in these six years; while in the year 1825 it was triumphantly stated by Mr. Huskisson that the British engrossed two-fifths of the navigation of the Sound. But there was an enormously increased trade in the timber which had been exported from those ports; and that would have been the means of giving employment to a much larger proportion of British ships, had it not been for the great competition to which they were exposed. He would now give a statement of the amount of tonnage that had entered the port of Hull in 1844, distinguishing the nations to which they belonged, these nations being Sweden, Norway, Russia, and Denmark :—

	British.		Foreign.	
	Ships.	Tons.	Ships.	Tons.
Sweden	30	5,387	120	14,002
Norway	2	116	29	3,043
Denmark	—	——	482	34,445
Prussia	80	10,812	222	32,698

He hoped after these statements, that the House would not be misled by the views of hon. Gentlemen opposite; he hoped the House would not say that the British shipowners were undeserving of protection. He would now state, from returns that were made to Mr. Huskisson, the amount of British shipping belonging to the United Kingdom, showing that the amount of shipping belonging to the United Kingdom had scarcely increased since the war :—

> "In the year 1816 the tonnage amounted to 2,783,000, and in 1826 to 2,635,000, showing a decrease of 148,000 tons. In the years 1842, 1843, and 1844, the number and tonnage of registered British ships stood thus :—

	No. of Ships.	Amount of Tonnage.
1842	23,207	2,990,849
1843	23,000	2,957,437
1844	23,253	2,994,166

It might be said we had done very well to maintain so large an amount of shipping when exposed to the competition of the world; but those who said so did not consider the enormous increase which, during the above period, had taken place in our exports and imports. In 1816, the amount of cotton imported into this country was 60,000,000 lbs.; in 1826, it amounted to 150,000,000 lbs.; in 1843, it was 673,193,000lbs.; and in1846, 646,111,000 lbs. There had been an immense increase in the quantity of wood imported, amounting, in 1843, to 600,000 loads, and in 1844 to 727,000 loads; and also in other articles, such as wine, tobacco, wool, &c., all of which had increased in an equal ratio. Why, instead of enabling the British shipping to remain at the point at which it now stood, it should have been more than trebled, but for the amount of competition to which it had been exposed. It was said by the hon. Gentleman opposite, that if this inquiry was granted, things which were injurious to the British shipowners might be discovered and removed; but if such were the object of the Committee now asked for, why did the hon. Gentleman direct himself so little to this view of the subject? He said the commerce of the country was taxed to the extent of 4,500,000*l.* by the protection given to British shipping. [Mr. RICARDO here remarked, that he had put his case hypothetically, having taken 10*s.* a ton as the amount of loss to commerce.] Why, the hon. Gentleman now admitted that the case he had put—the hypothetical case—was not worth one farthing. Yet he had put this forward as one of his arguments. He would say to the House, that before they removed protection from shipping, they at least should remove the restrictions which pressed upon it. In a report of the committee of the General Shipowners' Society, he found stated, in much better language than he could employ, the following sentiments on this question:—

> "As a member of the great community of the empire, the shipowner advances no claim to special or peculiar privileges: he has no right to demand, on abstract grounds, exemption from any burden to which other interests are subjected, or any immunity from which they are excluded. If they be protected, his right to protection is coequal with theirs. If they sustain the pressure of foreign competition, he must make up his mind to meet it also. All this, however, is true only so long as he is permitted freely to pursue, like others, his own interests in his own way, unfettered by any restrictions from which other interests are exempt. But if, for objects of supposed national benefit, conferring on him no separate or special advantage, the State imposes on him burdens and restrictions of a heavily disqualifying nature, common justice would prescribe that up to that point to which the proved disqualification extends, he should be protected from the competition of those who are free from his burdens; and common sense will determine, that, unless so protected, he must sink in the struggle of such competition. Now, this is exactly the case of the British shipowner. By the registry laws, he is restricted to the use of ships probably the most costly in the world. By the navigation laws, he is compelled to employ exclusively the highest paid and most expensively-fed seamen—those of native birth. By a variety of laws and regulations, deemed by the Legislature essential to some common interest or some general duty, he is impeded, taxed, and prevented from conducting his pursuits in the manner most conducive to his own interests. The effect of all this on his expenses must be self-evident. It has been established argumentatively, statistically, before Committees of Inquiry—by Parliamentary returns—by proof upon proof, defying refutation. It has been demonstrated by the most conclusive of all evidence—that of experience. Your committee have no desire to revive bygone controversies; but the annual records of their proceedings bear continual testimony to the practical effects that have followed in every instance in which the experiment has been tried of placing British shipping in a position of unprotected competition with the ships of foreign nations. They have before asserted, and they again repeat, because at this moment the fact cannot be too extensively known or too forcibly impressed, that in every case in which discriminating duties on imports have been withdrawn, and British ships have been left to compete, without protection, with the shipping of foreign States possessing a mercantile marine, the navigation of those States has greatly advanced, while our own has absolutely declined; or if, from increasing commerce, increased demand for tonnage has arisen, it has partaken in a very inadequate degree of the benefit of the increase, which has fallen chiefly into the hands of the foreign shipowner. The degree in which this effect will take place, will, of course, vary with the relative disproportion in expense of building, equipping, and navigating ships, between British tonnage and that of different foreign nations; but it is perfectly indisputable that, under his present disqualifying burdens, the British shipowner can compete with none. If, then, the principles of free trade are attempted to be further applied to British navigation, the ground must, both in common justice and in ordinary policy, be based on the removal of the restrictions under which the shipowner labours, before the competition which free trade would introduce be permitted."

He conjured the House to ponder these words—the restrictions here complained of should indeed be mitigated; but if they followed this up by removing the protection it had so long enjoyed, from that moment the interests of British navigation would decline. The country might increase in opulence, and extend its empire to every part of the globe; but security would be wanting; our very wealth would prove our weakness, by tempting the cupidity of hostile nations, while we should become the laughing-stock of our enemies by the gratuitous sacrifice of the elements of our national greatness. Was England to be made merely the workshop of the world? Did we look for the recruiting of our army and the equipment of our navy from the stunted population of our manufacturing districts?

> "Non his juventus orta parentibus
> Infecit æquor sanguine Punico;
> Pyrrhumque et ingentem cecidit
> Antiochum, Hannibalemque dirum:
> Sed rusticorum mascula militum
> Proles."

Let not the House, in a moment of delusion, consent to the appointment of this Committee, and fritter away the great interests committed to its charge. The hon. Member concluded by thanking the House for the indulgence it had shown towards him.

Mr. HUME was not surprised that an hon. Gentleman who avowed himself a protectionist, should endeavour to maintain protection to the only interest which now claimed it. The hon. Gentleman who had just sat down had made various comparisons with reference to the shipping of this country between 1816 and 1826, and between 1826 and 1840; but none of them had anything to do with the question they were now considering. The hon. Gentleman had asked them where they intended to stop in their advocacy of free trade? He (Mr. Hume) replied, that he would stop nowhere so long as any restriction remained. He wished to know whether there was anything which could prevent the English shipowner competing with the foreigner, provided he had equal facilities? He concurred with the hon. Gentleman when he said, that reciprocity was an unequal contest. It was. It was unjust to the shipping interest. He had always advocated the repeal of restrictions on the shipping interest, and his opinion remained the same, for he had never concealed from himself that the British shipowner had carried on his trade at great disadvantages. For every article formerly used in the construction of ships in this country, the British shipowner had to pay at least 50 per cent more than the foreigner, in consequence of the protective system of this country. Protection, therefore, instead of having benefited the shipowner, had nearly ruined him. Formerly, they had a fleet of 600 sail of whalers in the South Seas; but now the United States had no fewer than 700 ships in that trade. Such was the effect of protection. One of the objects of the Committee which had sat on this subject, was to afford a greater degree of protection; but all their efforts to obtain it had failed, and they had to rest content with merely reporting the evidence. If the hon. Gentleman would read through that evidence, he would find that no interest had been worse treated than the shipping interest had been. It had been loaded with taxation. Timber for shipbuilding had till lately been subjected to a tax of 250 per cent, and certain kinds of hard wood had paid from 50 to 100 per cent. If such protective duties had not existed, would not the shipping of this country have increased to a greater extent than it had done? But who were to be blamed for the continuance of those duties? In 1833, when the Government were desirous of relieving the shipping interest from the additional tax on timber, they were opposed by hon. Gentlemen opposite, the protectionists not only of corn, but of timber. It was not surprising, therefore, that foreign shipping should have increased, and that the shipping trade of this country should have been a losing concern. He had never been able to impress the shipping interest with a true sense of their interest. He had no doubt, however, before the present Committee terminated, hon. Gentleman opposite would be convinced of the necessity of freeing it from all restrictions. He believed that the prosperity of all interests in the kingdom depended upon their being perfectly free; but it was impossible the shipping interest could be free so long as the navigation laws were allowed to remain. He had not the least doubt that in the proposed Committee it would be proved, by the most incontrovertible evidence, the present laws were injurious. He could tell the hon. Member for Durham, that the same sort of compulsion which had induced Mr. Huskisson to enter into reciprocity treaties, would now compel the removal of the navigation laws. Any man who looked to the state of the colonies must admit the truth of what he said. The rule laid down by the right hon. Baronet the Member for Tamworth, that they should sell in the dearest and buy in the cheapest market, was the rule by which commerce ought to be regulated and protected——not protected in the sense which hon. Gentlemen opposite attached to the word. He hoped he should never use the word in that sense. Every man who used the word must carry in his mind an act of injustice. [*Laughter.*] Yes; it was impossible for any man to maintain protection for one individual, without inflicting an injustice on other individuals. That was his interpretation of the word. One principal object of inquiry by the Committee would be to ascertain how far these laws had destroyed the very objects for which hon. Gentlemen opposite had always contended; and another point for inquiry would be the effect which they had on our colonies. He had given notice of a Motion for copies of all applications from the colonies since the passing of the measures of the right hon. Baronet opposite, with regard to the effect of these measures. He believed it would appear that the general feeling in the colonies was in favour of being placed on the same footing as the mother country, and of being freed from the restrictions of the navigation laws. He held in his hand the copy of a report by the Board of Trade of Montreal, which had been sent him by the chairman, and which contained resolutions which had been transmitted by the Governor General to the Secretary for the Colonies. They demanded from this country the repeal of the imperial differential duties, the repeal of the three-shilling frontier duty on American wheat, and a modification of the navigation laws, so as to leave them free to procure the cheapest freighted vessel without regard to its being British or foreign. Two of these demands had already been granted. The third they were clearly entitled to. From a tabular statement which he held in his hand, he found that the average freight during three years of a barrel of flour from Montreal to Liverpool was 4*s.* 9½*d.*, while from New York to Liverpool it was only 2*s.* 1½*d.* The consequence was, that the greater portion of the produce of Canada intended for this country was sent to New York by the Erie Canal to be sent home in American vessels. It had been stated by a gentleman, with whom he believed the noble Lord the Member for Lynn had had some correspondence, Mr. Buchanan, that the navigation laws were considered by the colonists of Canada as a great grievance, and that unless they were removed there was some danger of a revolt. Such were the statements which these colonists in Canada were making, and such would be the statement which would come from Australia, and all their other colonies, as would be found to be the case when certain papers which had arrived in this country from them would be laid to-morrow on the Table of the House. And he firmly believed that no reasonable or suitable answer could be given to these remonstrances or to these demands. Such being the case, he conceived the time was fully arrived when an inquiry should be made in this matter, and if the necessity for some modification in the present system of our navigation laws was not sufficiently and satisfactorily proved, he for one would not be an advocate for such a measure.

SIR W. JAMES would not detain the House at any great length; but, considering the interests which he represented, he did not think it right to give a silent vote. He had given the matter the best attention he could, and must say that the hon. Member who had laid such statistical details before the House, had, by the industry with which he had collected them, and the skill and judgment with which he had arranged them, proved himself well worthy of the name he bore. He did not think any fair ground had been raised for resisting the Motion. It appeared to him that some hon. Gentlemen gratuitously assumed a certain position. Those hon. Members who considered themselves a party in that House, when they saw the Motion for inquiry conceded by the Government; when they saw inquiry, he might say demanded by the very parties interested, and who had concurred in a similar Motion in 1843 and 1844, yet they assumed a gratuitous duty, and aiming at a sort of high-flying patriotism which he confessed he did not understand; upon their own responsibility divided the House, as to whether or no investigation should take place. Why, what was asked? Nothing more than inquiry and investigation. Those who shrunk from inquiry could do so from no other reason than because they felt the weakness of their own case. He believed it had happened to almost every hon. Member who had sat for a length of time in that House, to have given votes which he subsequently saw reason to regret. He believed the oldest Members, as well as those like himself of only ten years' standing, were at one time or another in this position. It appeared to him that the Motion of the hon. Member for Stoke-upon-Trent bore a great resemblance to a Motion made some time back by the hon. Member for Stockport (Mr. Cobden). The arguments which were used by the hon. Gentleman (Mr. Liddell) for resisting the present Motion, bore a marked likeness to those used for resisting the Motion for an inquiry into the corn laws, and their effects upon the agricultural labourers. No agriculturist would now say, that any benefit to him had resulted from refusing that inquiry. As soon as the question of the corn laws was seriously agitated, as soon as there was a prospect of that event taking place, the agriculturists themselves were the first to cry out for inquiry. Who first taunted the agriculturists with this? The noble Lord the Member for the city of London. Therefore he would say to the shipowners and those who would advocate them, "If you value your interests and your welfare, do not oppose the Motion for inquiry." Why, it proved that Hull was carrying on a prosperous and extensive trade with Prussia, Denmark, and Sweden, which he hoped would long continue and prosper. He looked upon the repeal of the navigation laws as an application of the principles of free trade, which were undeniably sound and true. They were founded upon the principles of mutual prosperity, and it was a satisfactory thing to know that they were not only prospering themselves, but that the whole European community were prospering around them. The hon. Member for Durham had touched upon another point respecting wages; but this he thought had been satisfactorily confuted by the hon. Member for Montrose. If an Englishman did as much work in a day as three Frenchmen—and he had no doubt that this was the case—it was natural and reasonable that he should be paid higher wages; and yet that the work should be cheaper done. He thought also that the hon. Member for Montrose had made out an undeniable case with regard to the colonies. But, after all he had said, he wished carefully to guard himself against going the full length of the principles of the hon. Member for Stoke-upon-Trent. He did not say repeal the navigation laws at once; he was an advocate for gradual and progressive reform; they had gone on for a long time in a course of injustice, and, therefore, even in unravelling it, they ought to proceed cautiously. But this he would say, that the hon. Member had made out a case for inquiry which appeared to him to be perfectly unanswerable. The hon. Member for Durham had argued against the repeal of those laws, by referring to the greater expense incurred in manning and victualling English ships compared with foreigners, though he took no notice of the difference which the free-trade measures of last Session had made in that respect. But, supposing his figures to be accurate, how did the hon. Member account for the statement made by the hon. Member for Stoke-upon-Trent, that that portion of British shipping which was unprotected and exposed to the rivalry of all foreign nations, flourished to a greater degree than that other portion which had the full benefit of our navigation laws? But the question really at issue was, were the principles of free trade sound, or were they not? Were hon. Gentlemen not yet convinced of the soundness of the principle to buy in the cheapest and sell in the dearest market? He had, indeed, heard it said, that that was a dreadful and a very irreligious principle; but he must say for himself that he had yet to learn that it was contrary to the religion which he professed, to the interests of morality, or to the welfare of mankind. He could conceive of a philosopher adopting the principles of protection; he could conceive of a man forming a Utopia, in which the inhabitants were to make their own clothes—to weave, to sow, to provide food—to be, in fact, a self-sustaining community, and arguing that such a community would be happier and greater gainers than those who engaged in trade with foreign nations. If such persons were to say that trade was a curse—if they were to adopt the words of the poet—

> "Nequicquam Deus abscidit
>   Prudens Oceano dissociabili
> Terras: si tamen impiæ
>   Non tangenda rates transiliunt vada."

If that were the sentiment of such a person, resistance to this Motion would be all well and good; but, if a person believed that trade was not a curse, but a blessing—that the sea, instead of being dissociable, was intended as a highway for the commerce of nations—he did not see on what ground they could resist this Motion.

ALDERMAN THOMPSON took it for granted, from the speech which had just been delivered by the hon. Member, that the people of Hull wished to see their harbours and docks filled with Prussian and other foreign vessels. ["No, no!"] He had come to a different conclusion from the hon. Gentleman. He had not failed to see that the main supporters of this Motion for inquiry had already made up their minds as to the expediency of a modification, if not a total repeal of the navigation laws. The hon. Member for Montrose, candidly, fairly, and manfully—as in all he did—expressed his opinion. He told the House that he wanted no inquiry, that his mind was made up as to the expediency—nay, he believed the hon. Member said as to the justice of repealing the navigation laws. The hon. Member for Stoke-upon-Trent, he was sorry to say, had not dealt equally candidly with the House, because the hon. Member had founded his Motion upon the circumstance that the Committee which sat upon the state of the shipping interest in the years 1844-5 had not brought their inquiry to a conclusion. Now what was the object of the appointment of that Committee? Why, it was not to meddle with the navigation laws at all, but to inquire and report to the House what was the cause of the great depression which had taken place in the commercial marine of the country during the preceding four or five years. The reasons why that Committee had not finished its labours, had been most correctly stated by the hon. Member for North Durham. Reference had already been made to the evidence given before that Committee by the mover of this proposition. He would not weary the House by reading extracts from that evidence; but he would take the liberty of reading the answers to two questions which were put to his lamented friend, Mr. Somes, who was formerly a Member of that House. Mr. Somes was asked, "In what state do you consider British shipping to be at this time?" The answer was, "Most deplorable." He was then asked, "How long has it been in that state?" and he answered, "For the last three or four years." [Mr. HUME: He might have said for the last three-and-twenty.] Mr. Somes then went on to say —and he begged to call the attention of the House to this statement, in order to show the great progress which foreigners had made in the increase of their shipping, as compared with the increase of British shipping—Mr. Somes went on to say, that he had made a calculation, showing that in the last twenty years British tonnage had increased 42½ per cent, while the foreign tonnage of the northern parts of Europe had increased 172½ per cent. Now, he was ready to admit the statement that if the navigation laws were attempted to be maintained on the ground of protection to British shipping alone, that was an argument which could not be maintained. But he said that the navigation laws of this country were essential to its security, its power, and its independence. Let them free British shipping from all those regulations which rendered it necessary to maintain a numerous body of able and intelligent seamen—let them remove the obligation upon them to take apprentices, and to victual their ships in a manner which must be approved of by a public officer—let them remove the necessity of their carrying a surgeon and medicines, to which the foreigner was not subject—let them be relieved from the necessity of giving 5 per cent of their wages to the relief of disabled seamen, widows, and orphans, and then they would place British shipping in a better position than it was now in. But he would not say that it was not expedient to do that as regarded the general interests of the seamen. In every Act of Parliament which was formed in former times, the preamble of the Bill always contained a recital of the necessity of providing for the security and defence of the country; and in the preamble of an Act passed so recently as 1844, entitled an Act for amending and consolidating the Laws relating to Her Majesty's Seamen, the preamble stated that whereas the safety and preservation of the United Kingdom depended upon a large, constant, and ready supply of seamen; therefore it was expedient to promote the increase of those seamen, and to afford them encouragement and protection. He said, therefore, that the navigation laws were intimately connected with the general policy of this country. The hon. Member for Stoke-upon-Trent had stated that the amount of British tonnage entered inwards and outwards last year amounted to 8,000,000; and upon that he had raised an hypothesis on which to found his argument, that these laws pressed injuriously upon the merchants and consumers of the country, because he said he might reasonably assume that the operation of these laws raised the amount of freight 10*s.* per ton above what it would if trade was left to its natural course. Now, that was a most extraordinary statement, because what was the fact? Why, that taking the average rate of freights all over the kingdom, it did not amount to 10*s.* per ton. The hon. Member for Durham knew very well that in one of the greatest portions of the coasting trade of this country — the carrying of coals from Newcastle and Sunderland—the freights were now only 7*s.* 6*d.*, or 8*s.* per ton; and even this was higher than they used to be. His hon. Friend knew that in the North American colonies —in Nova Scotia, New Brunswick, Prince Edward's Island, and Newfoundland—there was a vast amount of tonnage which was increasing every year, and every one of those ships was justly entitled to the full benefit of our navigation laws; and therefore he conceived that a great injustice would be done to them if the House attempted to weaken or destroy these laws. In fact, the only colonies he was aware of that had a right to complain were the West Indies; but then that was compensated by the trade they carried on with our North American colonies, whose ships carried lumber to the West Indies, and returned with sugar. If he might refer again to the evidence given before the Committee of 1844, he would state that Mr. G. F. Young had stated that from 1840 to 1844, British ships had fallen in value from 25 to 30 per cent. Mr. Somes, who was the owner of 23,000 tons of shipping, all first-class vessels, said that he considered his property had decreased in value from 60 to 70 per cent. And yet the hon. Member said that he made this Motion for the purpose of further inquiry. He conceived that this Motion would be a most mischievous one to great and important interests; because it was quite impossible that the inquiry should be finished so as to allow of legislation taking place in the course of the present Session. If, therefore, Her Majesty's Government were of opinion that it would be wise and expedient to alter the navigation laws, he said they ought to come boldly forward at once, and to lay a Bill before the House; and then they and the country at large would know how to deal with the measure. But to leave these great and vast interests in a state of uncertainty for the space of eighteen months, was not to deal fairly by the community. Under these circumstances, he felt it his duty—if his hon. Friend should think proper to divide the House—to vote with him, as he felt satisfied that to obtain information was not the object in view; and he would add, that during the period he had had the honour of a seat in that House, he had sat upon three or four Committees, all inquiring into this subject, and he was sure that all the information the House could desire would be found in those reports.

Mr. BRIGHT observed, that some persons were of opinion that the navigation laws should not be interfered with; but it should be recollected that it was only the other day the House had suspended those laws to some extent; so that even supposing that those laws were founded on a sound principle, it appeared that, at all events, they were only fair-weather laws, and would not suit the country in times of apprehension and danger. It had been said by an hon. Member, that the Committee of 1844 was not a Committee of Inquiry into the navigation laws; but he (Mr. Bright) appealed to any hon. Member who was on the Committee, whether the principal bearing of the case, brought forward on the part of the shipowners, was not to show that the depression that had taken place in the shipping trade, was attributable to their acts of relaxation. Two facts had come within his (Mr. Bright's) knowledge, which showed that whatever advantages might arise from the navigation laws, some disadvantages also arose from them; and there being a mixture of good and evil, it was desirable they should examine minutely into them. A gentleman of his acquaintance, a merchant in Manchester, bought a quantity of cotton in Havre; speculation was going on in the country at the time; and prices were rising in consequence of the apprehensions of a short supply. The merchant to whom he referred had bought the cotton in Havre, for the purpose of bringing it to England, and it would be of great advantage if he could bring the cotton from Havre; but the navigation laws prevented that cotton being brought to England. It was the produce of one of those three quarters of the globe to which the navigation laws applied, and the result was that this gentleman was obliged to send that cotton back to the United States of America, and then bring it from the United States to this country. The merchant who had endeavoured to supply the means of labour for one of the greatest branches of our manufacturing industry, was thus subjected to a great loss from the operation of those laws; and let them bear in mind that it was of no advantage to the British shipowners. The British shipowner got nothing by it, and this gentleman suffered very much. He would mention another case. An American vessel arrived in Liverpool, consigned to a large house, with an order to freight her with British dry goods, and to send her to Hong-Kong. When they proceeded to load her, they were informed by the collector it was impossible that the ship could go to Hong-Kong. They consequently made inquiry at the Board of Trade; and after a considerable correspondence, it was found that she could not be admitted there; and 20,000*l.* or 30,000*l.* worth of the produce of this country, because it was on board an American ship, could not be landed in Hong-Kong, but had to go to Canton, and the British merchants in Hong-Kong lost all the advantages which they might derive from it if it were landed there. He submitted these two cases of actual and undoubted hardship, which no man could deny or dispute. It might be true, as the hon. Member for Westmoreland had said, that there were advantages in those laws; but yet there were also disadvantages arising from them, and it was worthy of inquiry whether those advantages to which the hon. Member had vaguely alluded, were deserving of being preserved. The time was gone by when such things could be cushioned without inquiry, and therefore he should vote with the greatest possible readiness for the inquiry moved for by the hon. Member for Stoke-upon-Trent.

VISCOUNT SANDON thought, that if this question of the navigation laws were to be brought before the House at all, it ought to be in the hands of the Government. He perfectly admitted that, considering the great changes which had recently taken place in the commercial and industrial systems of the country, it was their duty, from time to time, to revise their other systems, and to adopt such changes as might be rendered necessary. But when they were about to deal with a principle which was not purely a system of commerce, but one which affected the security and defence of the country, he must say that it was the part of the Government at once to come forward and distinctly to state their views. He confessed he thought it was perfectly unjustifiable on the part of the Government to throw such a measure upon the Table of the House, leaving it in the hands of a Gentleman holding particular opinions, but with no other responsibility than that of an ordinary Member of the House. He thought it was not right to leave the question in such a state, without guidance, responsibility, or control, in the hands of a private Member of Parliament. He did not mean to commit himself with regard to any particular modification of the navigation laws, especially as he thought that the late changes in our commercial system might render some change necessary. But it was the business of the Government to look into these changes, and to state openly to the House why they proposed these alterations, and the principles on which they were founded. With regard to the cases of hardship mentioned by the hon. Member for Durham, there could be no doubt that the navigation laws did injury to the pure principles of commerce. They were on the same footing with regard to the expenses of our army and navy; they proceeded upon the principle that it was necessary to sacrifice some of the benefits of commerce, in order to render commerce itself more secure. He was ready to vote for an inquiry supported by the Government, on the ground that it was desirable that the whole question should be considered; but at the same time he felt great difficulty in entering into the consideration of a question which was left in this unprotected, helpless manner.

MR. LABOUCHERE would not have troubled the House with any observations upon this question, if it were not for the reflections which the noble Lord the Member for Liverpool had cast upon the Government with regard to it; and really, he conceived, very unjustly. His noble Friend had admitted that the changes in our commercial system rendered it desirable that the question of the navigation laws should not be dealt with in a summary, indiscreet manner; but that they should be subject to a deliberate, cautious, careful inquiry, to see in what way they ought to be modified. But then his noble Friend said, that it was altogether wrong to throw this question loose upon a Committee of the House of Commons. Now he recollected that subjects of equal importance had frequently been delegated to Committees of the House; and he hoped never to see the time when any Member would dare to reply to an independent Member who thought proper to bring such a question before the House, that it was not a fit subject for a Committee of that House to look into. He appealed to the House whether the gravest and most important questions had not been dealt with in this manner. The questions of slavery, of the shipping trade, of the timber duties, and various other questions had been so dealt with. It was, no doubt, impossible to deny that an inquiry of this sort would throw doubt into the minds of many persons as to the permanency of these laws; but it was too much to say that because that might be the consequence of inquiry, therefore the House of Commons was to forbear to inquire into a subject of this description. He thought, therefore, that the attack of his noble Friend was unjust, and unwarranted by the conduct of former Governments and former Houses of Commons. His noble Friend admitted that the question of the navigation laws did require a dispassionate consideration with reference to the altered circumstances of the country. [Lord SANDON, spoke of the operation, not the general policy of those laws.] He did not understand that in granting this Committee, either the House or the Government were committed to the expression of any opinion for or against the policy of these laws ; all that they were committed to was an opinion that, considering the altered circumstances of the country, and especially considering the commercial changes which had recently taken place, it was proper that these laws should undergo a dispassionate scrutiny, and that a Select Committee was the best mode of instituting that investigation, with regard, for instance, to the interests of the colonies themselves. It was well known that some of our colonies considered that they had been hardly used by the neglect to make such alterations in the navigation laws as they considered the necessary concomitants of the other commercial changes which had taken place; and it was only fair that they should have an opportunity of laying their case fully before Parliament. They had asked for that opportunity by numerous petitions; and they could obtain it in no more effectual mode than a Select Committee would afford. He protested altogether against the doctrine of his noble Friend, that it was the duty of the Government to prevent an independent Member of that House from bringing forward such a subject, and moving for a Committee upon it. He hoped that, as a Member of the Government, he should always be ready to take his full share of the responsibility which attached to the Government. For the measures which they introduced, the Government were responsible, and he trusted that they should never shrink from that responsibility; but he considered it would be an invasion of the privileges of the House of Commons, if the Government were to say, "We will keep in our own hands every question of national importance." He said, as a Minister of the Crown, as plainly as he could say it as an independent Member of the Government, that the House of Commons ought not to tolerate such an assumption on the part of any Government. It was the clear right of every independent Member of that House to propose an inquiry into any subject, which, in his judgment, required it; and that House ought not to refuse the Motion merely because it was not proposed by a Member of the Government. The Committee, when appointed, made such recommendations as they thought fit; and then it would be for the Government to adopt those recommendations or not at their discretion. That too was their part; but he could not consider that the present Government were open to the censure of his noble Friend, because, upon a Motion brought forward by an hon. Gentleman fully competent to deal with the subject, they had not thought fit to oppose a Select Committee; in doing which they had only followed the example of other Governments, which had not refused Committees on subjects of equal nicety, though moved for by independent Members of that House.

Lord G. BENTINCK: I differ altogether from the right hon. Gentleman opposite; and concur entirely with my noble Friend the Member for Liverpool in thinking that it is not consistent with the duty of Her Majesty's Government to permit a great question of national policy to be sent up-stairs before a Select Committee, when the proposer and seconder of that Committee have been pleased to use such language as this: that the shipping interest and the commercial navy of England may be compared to pedlars and packhorses, and that the shipping trade in England should be made as free as the trade in shoes. When that is the spirit in which Gentlemen opposite are prepared to go into this inquiry, I think it is perfectly clear that that inquiry will be conducted in a different *animus* from that with which the inquiry of 1844 was undertaken. The Committee of 1844 was not a Committee to inquire into the operation of the policy of the navigation laws, but to inquire into the state of our commercial marine, and was proposed with the view, not of discouraging, but of encouraging the shipping interest. But now we learn from the hon. Gentleman the Member for the Potteries, that his object is to reduce the rates of freight, to purchase sailors and shipbuilders in the cheapest market, and to drive down our shipwrights from 6*s.* a day, which he says that they now get in consequence of the existing monopoly, to 3*s.* 6*d.* per day; and it is proposed, somewhat on the principle of the old Irish soldier, who spent "half a crown out of sixpence a day," to diminish the freights by 10*s.* a ton, they being now only 7*s.* 6*d.* These are the views and this is the spirit in which the hon. Gentleman opposite will enter upon the inquiry; but we are also told that England has lost her British colonies by maintaining her navigation laws. Now I, Sir, had always thought that England lost her British colonies by endeavouring to put a tax upon tea on those who were not represented in this House. Again, we are told that Portugal lost her Brazils through her navigation laws—["No, no!"]—through her colonial system. The hon. Gentleman was drawing a comparison between the colonial system of this country, which prohibited the trading with other countries, and the colonial system of Portugal; but I thought that I remembered that the elder branch of the House of Braganza, finding the fortunes of Portugal falling, had thought it better to retire to a more secure seat on the throne of the Brazils. For these reasons, without entering into the subject at any greater length, I shall take the same course with my noble Friend, and resist this inquiry. [Hon. MEMBERS: But he supports it.]

VISCOUNT SANDON had explained that, notwithstanding his objection to it, he was loth to resist a Committee supported by the Government.

LORD G. BENTINCK: Then as I, Sir, concur in the objections felt by my noble Friend, I will take the more open and decided course of resisting the Committee altogether. The right hon. Baronet the Member for Hull has endeavoured to exercise his influence with my hon. Friends on this side of the House, and has warned them that, if they hastily oppose this proposal, they may soon have cause to repent; but I hope that my hon. Friends about me will not be alarmed by the warnings of the hon. Gentleman. No doubt the hon. Gentleman, having turned his back on every vote which he has ever given, is wise in advising others to be cautious how they act; but as my hon. Friends about me can trust to their own consistency and firmness, the advice of the hon. Member is unnecessary; and I trust that, with me, they will resist the proposed inquiry.

MR. MITCHELL said, that the noble Lord opposite had supported the Committee in 1844, because he was of the same opinion with the mover; and he opposed the present Committee, because he was of a party different from that of the mover. There could be no other reason, because the question was as much unsettled by that Committee, as it would be by the present. He, however, did not believe that the interests of the shipowners would be disturbed by granting this inquiry. Never since the war, had they been in so prosperous a state; never had there been so favourable an opportunity for entering upon the investigation. Were the present high rates of freight likely to continue? The best evidence of it was to be found in the fact, that the noble Lord and hon. Gentlemen opposite had consented to a suspension of the navigation laws, admitting, by that consent, that the British shipping was at present insufficient for our carrying trade. But it was obvious that for many years there must be a very large carrying trade in corn; and, consequently, high freights. He, however, should not go into the Committee, as had been suggested by the noble Lord, with any determination to abolish protection. All he wanted was a systematic inquiry, to which the navigation laws, though they had been passed 200 years, had never been subjected; and he believed that the fear of total abolition was a complete bugbear. He did not understand his hon. Friend the Member for Stoke-upon-Trent to say, that he would reduce the freights by 10*s.* per ton, but that he was using that as an illustration only; but he totally dissented from his hon. Friend the Member for Westmoreland, who, in reply to his hon. Friend the Member for Hull, had stated that the average freight was only 10*s.* per ton. [Alderman THOMPSON: In the coasting trade.] But, then, his hon. Friend the Member for Stoke-upon-Trent had referred, not to the coating trade alone, but to the general trade of the country. The great object was to check very high freights, and so to avoid the necessity of resorting occasionally to the objectionable course of a temporary suspension of the law. It was not, certainly, to be forgotten that there were special burdens on the shipping interest; as, for instance, the lighthouse dues, and the charitable provision for seamen, which, in his opinion, ought to be charged upon the general revenue of the country. It was a disagreeable thing to mention in that House, but he had good reason to believe that the captains of our ships were not as efficient as they should be. He had repeated orders from abroad to charter any vessels but French or English—a very humiliating exception. Ships of British oak were good ships; the only bad British ships were those of Canadian timber, which were little better than floating rafts; but the reason of the exception given to him was this, that the captains of almost all other nations, took more care of their cargoes. Now, as he believed that there was nothing like competition for stimulating people, he fancied that a little more competition would, in this respect, do all the good in the world. Besides, our numerous reciprocity treaties brought us into competition with other countries not subject to the restriction of navigation laws; and in that point of view, therefore, they were a disadvantage to our shipping interest. He, however, was prepared to go into Committee, as he believed the House generally were, with minds completely unoccupied, and ready to hear the whole case.

CAPTAIN HARRIS said, that he was not one who would suppose that any Committee of that House would enter upon an investigation committed to it with a predetermination in favour of one particular view; nor was he prepared to deny that a Select Committee was the best tribunal to investigate a matter of this sort; but when a Committee on a subject of national policy was moved for, he required to have good grounds for that inquiry laid before him. For those grounds he must look to the speeches of the hon. Gentlemen who had moved and seconded the proposal. Now as to the comparison of the pedlar, he did not object to it as an emblem of the free trader. The pedlar was full of wise saws: he bought in the cheapest and certainly sold in the dearest market; and when one pedlar set up, another pedlar was sure to oppose him; and if one of them bought his wares for 10*s.* and the other for 20*s.*, of course the former would undersell the latter. So it was with national competitors. The result of former inquiries might be recalled with advantage. In 1833, Mr. Nichols, an eminent shipowner, was examined by a Committee, and in answer to questions as to the cost of building ships in different countries, he stated that the cost in the Thames was from 13*l.* to 14*l.* per ton; while in Dantzic it was only 5*l.* 7*s.* 6*d.* It was evident that the shipowner who could not carry freights under 20*s.* a ton, must be driven out of the market by the shipowner who could do so at the charge of 10*s.* The navigation laws might be dated from the time of Cromwell, one of the wisest statesmen (though a most consummate villain) this country ever produced. They were consolidated under the Act of Charles II. After the Peace of 1815, several important changes took place. In 1816 the Reciprocity Act with America was passed. In 1824 similar Acts were passed with Prussia and several other northern States: and in 1833 an Act of Consolidation was passed. On that occasion the present party now in power were then in office; and looking at the debates which took place at that period, he was justified in advising hon. Members to be cautious in assenting to the present Motion. There was one point which, to one of the profession to which he had the honour to belong, was particularly interesting and important—that of supplying men for the naval service of their country. Should these laws protecting the British shipowners be repealed, they would consider themselves justified in asking us to do away also with the laws regarding the employment of foreigners as mariners, and the restriction to a minimum number of men in proportion to the tonnage of all British vessels. He begged leave to quote the opinion of one whose name would be heard with respect and veneration—the opinion of Nelson—upon the effect of the navigation laws. The energies of that great man were always roused whenever the interests and the honour of this country were concerned; and it would be remembered by all who had read his life, that when stationed in the West Indies, in command of a ship, he took a course contrary to the orders of his admiral; and they all knew that to disobey the orders of a superior was no joke to a naval man. But Nelson disobeyed orders from the sincerest motives of patriotism, for the purpose of breaking up the monopoly of the carrying trade with our West India islands, then enjoyed by the Americans contrary to the Navigation Act. He seized their ships—the lawyers were against him, but the country was with him, and he carried his point. He saw that the trade carried on by the Americans would ruin the carrying trade of England, and he stepped in to prevent it. To preserve the carrying trade of England now, he (Captain Harris) would maintain the navigation laws as they stood. Canada having been mentioned during the course of the debate, he would take leave to remind hon. Gentlemen, that if there were any fear of ruin in that quarter, it would ensue because Canadian produce could no longer fetch a value similar to what it had obtained before the recent changes. If then they were to have the proposition of an out-and-out free trader, receiving the incidental support of the Government, and the support also of a particular section of the House, who had lately joined the free traders, he felt it to be his duty to withstand the Motion at once, and he should therefore therefore vote against it.

Mr. WAWN was for a full inquiry. There was, however, one branch which the Government ought to take up on its own responsibility, and that was an inquiry into the circumstances of the British sailor. If English shipping should decrease, and the British sailor be forced into the service of other countries, where were men to be found in the time of war? He hoped also that the Government would jealously watch over the constitution of the Committee, and see that it was not composed of men pledged to one set of opinions or another, but composed of men in whose candour, impartiality, and judgment, reliance could be placed.

SIR ROBERT PEEL: I wish to state that it is my intention to give my support to the proposition of the hon. Gentleman the Member for Stoke-upon-Trent. I think there can be no reason given why there should not be an inquiry into the operation and effect of the navigation laws; nor why there should not be an opportunity given of ascertaining whether the maintenance of those laws, as they at present exist, is for the interest of British commerce, or for the interest of British shipping. Above all, I think it is a subject necessary for consideration whether or no the maintenance of those laws, as affecting our mercantile interests, is necessary for the support of the maritime supremacy of this country. I give my assent to this inquiry, not to support the views of any hon. Member, although the Motion is proposed by an individual Member of Parliament, and assented to by the Government; yet I think assenting to the inquiry in no way binds the parties to support the particular opinions of the hon. Member. The whole subject is to be referred to a Committee, not for the purpose of giving effect to any particular preconceived notions, but to have a *bonâ fide* inquiry into all the bearings of this very important question. It is on this condition that I give my ready assent to this proposal. It has been remarked in the course of this debate, that the navigation laws have endured for two hundred years, and that they date their origin from the period of the Protectorate. The navigation laws, I think, are of much older date. The origin of them, I apprehend, was almost simultaneous with the commencement of a commercial and military marine in this country, and that at the time of the Protectorate the principle then existing was incorporated in the code of laws. But whatever may be their antiquity, you have been compelled from time to time to relax them, not from any theoretical principle with regard to them, but from mere necessity. In the year 1815 why did you relax those navigation laws? Was it upon the chances of any superior speculative advantages which you might derive from their relaxation? No. It was because the Americans were determined to introduce and to act upon your principles, and to levy duties upon your ships entering their ports, and levy duties upon your goods in the same manner as you levied upon foreign vessels and goods entering yours. And the question you had to consider in the year 1815 was, whether by the rigid maintenance of the navigation laws you would not give advantages to the produce of other countries in American markets; or by relinquishing a portion of them, and admitting American vessels to equivalent advantages with your own in British ports, you would not secure the intercourse with the United States. It was not then on any speculative notion you relaxed the navigation laws in 1815. The Americans had themselves applied the principle of those laws, and you had to take your choice between the exclusion of your commerce from American ports, or the relaxation of your laws. Why was it too that Mr. Huskisson again relaxed the navigation laws in the year 1824? Mr. Huskisson did not then act upon any speculative notion. He did so because Prussia was preparing to act then upon precisely the same principle as the United States had adopted in 1815. In the course of the speech which Mr. Huskisson made in 1826 upon the budget, he explained his motives for having relaxed those laws in signing the reciprocity treaties in the year 1824. It was because Prussia was then preparing to follow the example of the United States. He had been informed that Prussia was about to subject British vessels and British goods entering Prussian ports to similar disadvantages to those that Prussian ships and Prussian goods were subjected to on entering British ports. The Prussian Minister said, "We shall go on imitating your example. We shall not only impose upon British goods unfavourable discriminating duties as compared to Prussian, but we shall place upon British ships the same restrictions as you impose upon ours." And it was the fear of the operation of those restrictive laws on British commerce that made Mr. Huskisson admit Prussian ships to the same privileges in British ports as your own. Afterwards the same privileges were extended to the ships of Norway and Sweden. It was, therefore, on account of the great changes that have taken place in the commercial system of the world, that you have gradually relaxed these laws. Let us see, then, and consider maturely and deliberately, whether the recent changes that have been effected in our commercial policy, may not render some further change necessary in our navigation laws. And as it is a paramount consideration not to be on any account discarded, I hope the Government will take care that the Committee be so constituted, and its objects so directed, that, after a deliberate and dispassionate inquiry into the subject referred to it, its decision may secure as much confidence from the House as the decision of any Committee can obtain, and have as much authority with the country as the decision of any Parliamentary Committee can command.

Mr. HUDSON felt it his duty, as representing a great commercial interest in the country, to give some reasons for his vote on the present occasion. The right hon. Baronet, who had just sat down, had commenced his speech by saying, that the appointment of the Committee would not give any sort of pledge to the House for the pursuit of a particular course with regard to the subsequent relaxation of the navigation laws. But he had concluded his speech by telling the House that it might be possible to effect some such alteration, and that some alteration should in fact take place. Now, what was the object of the hon. Gentleman's Committee? The hon. Member, no doubt, intended that some alteration should take place in the navigation laws; and he firmly believed that any alteration that could be made would be injurious to the British shipping interest and to the British seaman. Believing too, as he did, that the shipping interest was decidedly opposed to any alteration, he should give his vote against the Motion. He thought, too, that the matter should not have been left to an individual Member of the House. He thought that the Government should have undertaken the conduct of the inquiry, if they approved of it, instead of remaining quiescent.

Mr. HUTT said, that having been a member of the Committee appointed in the year 1844, he was anxious to say a word upon the subject before the House. He thought that a misconception existed with regard to the appointment of the Committee. He recollected that, only three years ago, he was permitted, without any remonstrance or obstruction, to have a Committee of Inquiry into matters connected with one of the most important laws of the British Constitution, the Act of Settlement itself. He did not wish to pronounce any opinion of his own on the navigation laws; but he would tell the House the opinion which Mr. Burke had left on record on these laws. Mr. Burke stated it to be his conviction that the prosperity of this country was much less dependent on the navigation laws than was generally supposed. He thought, therefore, that an inquiry into their operation might very fairly be instituted; for he could not bring himself to believe that their chief excellence was dependent on the Act of Charles II.

Mr. DISRAELI would not detain the House for more than five minutes; but as the question before them had assumed several characters during the discussion, and as they were going to a division, he thought it highly important that the feelings of hon. Gentlemen on his side of the House should not be misunderstood. In the first place, he begged the House to observe, that in the vote they were about giving, they were not giving a vote in favour of the navigation laws. They did not consider that question to be before the House, and their vote would be merely one against inquiry. Hon. Gentlemen might think there was no difference in the distinction which he drew; but he hoped to be able to make the majority of the House agree with him that such a distinction was a proper and real one. The right hon. Gentleman the Member for Tamworth laid down a very broad ground for the vote which he was to give, as he inferred from the speech of the right hon. Gentleman that night that he was not disposed to resist the investigation of any question which should be brought before the House of Commons. That appeared to him to be a very novel and dangerous proposition; as it seemed to him, that though investigation might be necessary in some cases, it was not as matter that should be morbidly encouraged on all occasions. He knew not what subject or what branch of commerce there was on which questions might not be raised, that would, according to that principle, justify a demand for inquiry, nor did he see why multitudes of Committees should not be sitting down investigating details into various branches of industry and various processes of law, to the disturbance both of the finances and of the law of the country to an extent that would by no means justify such a course of proceeding. But he said that the vote which they were about giving, was not in favour of the navigation laws, but against inquiry. The right hon. Baronet the Member for Tamworth laid before the House with that perspicuity which he always could command, the grounds of former interference with the navigation laws. But there could be no doubt that the measures brought forword by Mr. Huskisson were not mere speculative measures. They were measures of inevitable necessity at the time, and it was quite impossible that the alteration which he proposed should not take place; and he was not for a moment contending against the gradual or occasional alteration of a law even so important as the navigation laws. But the question they had to decide was, were they to have further inquiry on a question on which the most ample information already existed? It was a subject on which so much investigation had taken place, that it was already familiar, not only to statesmen, but familiar in all its details to every Gentleman in that House. But at the same time, as great alterations had taken place in the commercial laws of this country, there could be no doubt but that the effect of these alterations on the commercial marine interests of the kingdom, ought to be investigated by the Ministry of the country. He could not conceive how any Ministry proposing the great commercial alterations of last year, or any Ministry succeeding them in office, could think of accepting power under these circumstances, without having the question under their consideration, and made the subject of their Cabinet councils. He thought, therefore, that it was the duty of the Ministry—whether the late Ministry, if they had remained in power, or those of any other party that might have succeeded them—that it was the duty of the Government of the country, to have come forward with a decided opinion on this subject; and if they saw it was necessary that there should be a further alteration in these laws—that there should be continued modifications of them—that they should have embodied their convictions in a Bill, and have brought that Bill before Parliament, and have staked their Ministerial character and existence on a measure of such immense importance to the prosperity of the country. But what was the conduct of Her Majesty's Government on this occasion? They had adopted a course which placed the House, and the country too, in a very peculiar position, and which, he should add, did not tell for their interest. The noble Lord at the head of Her Majesty's Government appealed to the House to make a temporary alteration in the navigation laws. He would ask the House whether, from the manner of the noble Lord, or from any communication which he made to the House on that occasion, welcomed as he was by every hon. Gentleman in the House, whatever his party opinions might be, in meeting an exigency by any temporary sacrifice—whether the noble Lord had given them any intimation that this temporary change would lead to an ulterior and permanent alteration being proposed or approved of by Her Majesty's Government. He thought the manly course for the noble Lord to have taken, would be to come down to the House, and say that in the present exigency of the case, he only intended asking for a temporary suspension of the navigation laws, but that he thought it due to the House, to state, that Her Majesty's Ministers, under the present state of the commercial laws, had considered very deeply the effect of the alterations in these laws on the navigation laws, and that they would be ready to communicate their views to this House on this important subject on a future occasion; that they did not immediately press the question on the House, but that he made the announcement because he did not wish the temporary suspension of the navigation laws should, under the circumstances, pass *sub silentio;* that the subject was one which ought to be investigated, and that the Ministers of the Crown would make that investigation, and bring the result before the House. That, he thought, was the course which the noble Lord should have pursued; but that course not having been taken, the House was at present not called upon to vote in favour of, or against the navigation law. They were required to give their opinion simply, whether it were desirable at the termination of the existence of Parliament, and under the present circumstances of the country, at the bidding of a private Member, who, as it were, pulled the Government after him; whether it was right and judicious to give their support to a Motion for inquiry. He did not think that by the vote which he was about giving, he would preclude himself from giving a vote on any future occasion on the subject of the navigation laws themselves. What he objected to was, inquiry on a subject of such paramount importance on which they had already the fullest information, and the most voluminous reports. And, then, what was the basis of every speech which they had heard? One hon. Gentleman told them that these laws existed for 200 years. The right hon. Baronet the Member for

Tamworth reminded that hon. Member that the system was much older; but at all events they had 200 years' experience at the least of these laws. As to the argument of the right hon. Gentleman the Secretary for Ireland, he would remind the right hon. Gentleman, that though they had often appointed such Committees before, still it was not an unusual thing for Ministers to oppose the appointment of Committees. They had here a law which was universally acknowleged to be of a constitutional character; and it was therefore one on which, of all others, they ought to have the opinion of Her Majesty's Government. As he said before, he merely rose because hon. Gentlemen on his side of the House wished, before recording their votes, to have it understood that they thought it was the duty of Her Majesty's Government—if they had any doubts as to these laws—to have removed these doubts in private council, and then to have come down to the House, and stated the course which they were prepared to recommend.

LORD JOHN RUSSELL: The hon. Gentleman who has just sat down has stated, I think fairly, the question before the House; and I agree with him in his statement of that question, although I come to an entirely opposite conclusion. The hon. Gentleman says the question before the House is, not whether we should approve or disapprove of the navigation laws, but whether we should consent to an inquiry. Now that is the question before the House. I think it is fairly the question raised by the hon. Gentlemen's Motion; but I come to an opposite conclusion from the hon. Gentleman regarding it, because it seems to me that it is a question most fitting for inquiry. I quite allow that when I brought forward the question of the temporary suspension of the navigation laws, I did not do so with any view to a permanent alteration in them. I considered that whether the navigation laws were defensible or indefensible, the temporary suspension of these laws was necessary and justifiable at the moment, and therefore I did not take any advantage of the proposition for the temporary suspension of the laws to induce the House to vote for any inquiry generally into them. But I say that it is impossible for any hon. Gentleman to assert that these laws are of that constitutional character, or of that firm and fixed nature, which renders it impossible for us to consent to any alteration whatever in them. Sir, I cannot but reflect that not many years ago Mr. Huskisson thought it necessary to propose an alteration of these laws; and I cannot forget also that the hon. Gentlemen who oppose this Motion, admitted that he had no other course to take but that which he adopted, from the great evils which would have followed if he had not done so. Again, when another hon. Gentleman defended the navigation laws as far as they related to the fisheries, it should not be forgotten that Mr. Huskisson gave the strongest opinion on that matter also, and that again a great alteration was made in these laws at the time alluded to by the right hon. Baronet the Member for Tamworth, when he was himself a Minister of the Crown. I think that it is agreed thereon that circumstances may occur which require that an alteration should be made in these laws, instead of their being of that unalterable and permanent character which the hon. Gentleman supposes. [Mr. DISRAELI: The noble Lord entirely misunderstands my argument.] The hon. Gentleman certainly used the words that the navigation laws were of a constitutional character, and that the question was one not merely affecting the commerce and shipping of the country, but that it was one of a constitutional nature. But it is admitted that circumstances may arise from time to time that require the modification and alteration of those laws, and that such alterations or modifications may be of so pressing a nature as to meet with general assent. But now, supposing that Her Majesty's Government, having a great deal of other business to bring before Parliament, should have come down and proposed to the House an alteration in the navigation laws, as the hon. Gentleman says we ought to have done if we thought it necessary; I think it probable that we would have been met by a demand, "Will you propose this alteration without inquiry? Will you not allow the shipping interest, which is so deeply interested in the matter, the benefit of an inquiry in the first place? Will you, who are so deeply engaged with other matters, ask the House to consent to an alteration of so important a law without the intervention of a Select Committee, before whom the parties interested can state their grievances and support their rights?" I think it is very likely that we should be met by such questions as these; and it would be very difficult to reply to them; and therefore when my hon. Friend proposes the course which he recommends, I cannot but think that it would be of great use to the House of Commons, and to the country, that a Committee should be appointed, and that all parties interested should be brought before that Committee, and permitted the liberty of stating their views. It is true that the Government of the country has many and great means of obtaining information; but I know of few means that are better for procuring the fullest and best information on any matter, than by the examination of persons deeply and intimately connected with such matter, before a Committee of the House of Commons, where they would be examined by persons holding different views and advocating different bearings of the question. I think, therefore, that it is probable we may derive great advantages from the inquiries of the Committee of the House of Commons which my hon. Friend proposes. Now, with regard to any measures that may result from this inquiry, I can only say that, with respect to all these subjects, we have had very great changes of late years. These changes have affected various interests, and, among others, they have affected very deeply the colonial interests. We have heard some of our colonies declare that it is hardly fair for us to have made these alterations, and at the same time to leave them subject to the navigation laws. Well, if they have that statement to make, let us hear them in support of it, and learn what their grievances are. But there is another part of the case which also deserves inquiry, and that is as regards the shipping interests themselves. Heretofore several Committees were appointed on this part of the case; but they were merely appointed with a view to ascertain whether we could go back to a system of greater protection, on the ground of the necessity which they laboured under, for some equivalent for the greater expenses to which they were subjected in comparison with other countries in building and victualling their ships, and which they could not bear unless further restrictions were imposed in their favour. Now let us hear what the restrictions of which they complain are, and see what modifications are practicable, in order that the great shipping interest, which is one of the chief means of advancing the political greatness of this country, may be best promoted. I do not myself agree in the arguments that would lead us back to a system of protection; but I do say that if we are to go on in the way of freedom, it is desirable that the benefits of freedom, which are extended to other parties in the community, should be extended to those also who are peculiarly affected by these laws. On behalf, therefore, of the shipping interest, as well as on behalf of those who advocate a modification in the navigation laws, I shall cordially give my vote in support of the Motion of my hon. Friend. I did not myself intend to propose a Committee on this subject; but I am very glad that a Member so independent and intelligent as my hon. Friend, should have taken up the subject, and brought the Motion for a Select Committee on these laws before the House.

The House divided:—Ayes 155; Noes 61: Majority 94.

List of the Ayes.

Acheson, Visct.
Acland, T. D.
Aglionby, H. A.
Ainsworth, P.
Baine, W.
Bannerman, A.
Barkly, H.
Baring, rt. hon. F. T.
Barnard, E. G.
Barron, Sir H. W.
Bell, J.
Berkeley, hon. C.
Berkeley, hon. Capt.
Blake, M. J.
Bodkin, W. H.
Bouverie, hon. E. P.
Bowles, Adm.
Bowring, Dr.
Bright, J.
Brotherton, J.
Brown, W.
Buller, C.
Byng, rt. hon. G. S.
Callaghan, D.
Cardwell, E.
Carew, W. H. P.
Chaplin, W. J.
Cholmeley, Sir J. M.
Clements, Visct.
Clerk, rt. hon. Sir G.
Colebrooke, Sir T. E.
Collett, J.
Copeland, Ald.
Corry, rt. hon. H.
Cowper, hon. W. F.
Crawford, W. S.
Denison, E. B.
Dennistoun, J.
Dickinson, F. H.
Duckworth, Sir J. T. B.
Duncan, Visct.
Duncan, G.
Dundas, Adm.
Dundas, D.
Easthope, Sir J.
Egerton, Sir P.
Ellice, rt. hon. E.
Ellis, W.
Escott, B.
Esmonde, Sir T.
Evans, Sir De L.
Ewart, W.
Fitzwilliam, hon. G. W.
Forster, M.
Fox, C. R.
French, F.
Gibson, rt. hon. T. M.
Goulburn, rt. hon. H.
Graham, rt. hon. Sir J.
Granger, T. C.
Grattan, H.
Grey, rt. hon. Sir G.
Grosvenor, Lord R.
Grosvenor, Earl
Guest, Sir J.
Hall, Sir B.
Harcourt, G. G.
Hawes, B.
Hay, Sir A. L.
Hayes, Sir E.
Heathcoat, J.
Herbert, rt. hon. S.
Hill, Lord M.
Hobhouse, rt. hon. Sir J.
Hope, Sir J.
Hope, A.
Howard, hon. H.
Humphery, Ald.
Hutt, W.
James, W.
James, Sir W. C.
Jervis, Sir J.
Kelly, J.
Labouchere, rt. hon. H.
Langston, J. H.
Lascelles, hon. W. S.
Lincoln, Earl of
Lindsay, hon. Capt.
Loch, J.
Lockhart, A. E.
Macaulay, rt. hon. T. B.
M'Carthy, A.
M'Taggart, Sir J.
Maitland, T.
Masterman, J.
Maule, rt. hon. F.
Mitcalfe, H.
Mitchell, T. A.
Moffatt, G.
Morpeth, Visct.
Morris, D.
Mostyn, hon. E. M. L.

Napier, Sir C.
Newry, Visct.
O'Brien, C.
O'Brien, J.
O'Brien, W. S.
O'Connell, D. jun.
O'Connell, J.
O'Conor Don
O'Ferrall, R. M.
Ogle, S. C. H.
Oswald, A.
Oswald, J.
Paget, Lord A.
Parker, J.
Peel, rt. hon. Sir R.
Philips, M.
Plumridge, Capt.
Pusey, P.
Rice, E. R.
Rich, H.
Romilly, J.
Russell, Lord J.
Rutherfurd, A.
Sandon, Visct.
Seymour, Lord
Sheridan, R. B.
Smith, rt. hon. R. B.
Somers, J. P.
Somerset, Lord G.
Somerville, Sir W. M.
Stuart, W. V.
Strutt, rt. hon. E.
Sutton, hon. H. M.
Tancred, H. W.
Thornely, T.
Tufnell, H.
Tuite, H. M.
Turner, E.
Vesey, hon. T.
Villiers, hon. C.
Walker, R.
Warburton, H.
Ward, H. G.
Watson, W. H.
Wawn, J. T.
Wellesley, Lord C.
Williams, W.
Winnington, Sir T. E.
Wood, rt. hon. Sir C.
Wood, Col. T.
Wortley, hon. J. S.
Wyse, T.
Yorke, H. R.

TELLERS.

Hume, J.
Ricardo, J. L.

List of the NOES.

Allix, J. P.
Arkwright, G.
Austen, Col.
Bailey, J. jun.
Bankes, G.
Baring, T.
Baskerville, T. B. M.
Bateson, T.
Bennet, P.
Bentinck, Lord G.
Beresford, Major
Blackstone, W. S.
Blakemore, R.
Broadwood, H.
Brooke, Lord
Buck, L. W.
Clifton, J. T.
Cole, hon. H. A.
Conolly, Col.
Disraeli, B.
Douglas, Sir H.
Ferrand, W. B.
Finch, G.
Forbes, W.
Frewen, C. H.
Gore, M.
Granby, Marq. of
Grimsditch, T.
Grogan, E.
Hall, Col.
Hamilton, G. A.
Harris, hon. Capt.
Henley, J. W.
Hodgson, R.
Hotham, Lord
Houldsworth, T.
Hudson, G.
Inglis, Sir R. H.
Lygon, hon. Gen.
Mackenzie, W. F.
Manners, Lord J.
Maxwell, hon. J. P.
Miles, W.
Morgan, O.
Newdegate, C. N.
O'Brien, A. S.
Packe, C. W.
Palmer, R.
Pigot, Sir R.
Repton, G. W. J.
Rolleston, Col.
Round, J.
Rushout, Capt.
Shaw, rt. hon. F.
Sibthorp, Col.
Stuart, J.
Tyrell, Sir J. T.
Verner, Sir W.
Waddington, H. S.
Walpole, S. H.
Walsh, Sir J. B.

TELLERS.

Thompson, Ald.
Liddell, hon. H. T.

CATHOLIC DISABILITIES.

MR. WATSON moved for leave to bring in a Bill for the further repeal of enactments imposing pains and penalties upon Her Majesty's Roman Catholic subjects on account of their religion. The hon. and learned Member said, the Bill he proposed to bring in, was exactly the same as that which he had introduced in the last Session: and that the principle of it had been acknowledged by two successive Acts of Parliament, one passed in 1844, and the other last year. As he understood there was no objection to the Motion, he would not trouble the House at present with any statement of the provisions of the Bill.

SIR R. H. INGLIS said, it appeared from the hon. and learned Gentleman's address, that he grounded his Motion for leave to bring in this Bill upon the fact that on two previous occasions the House of Commons had affirmed its principle. Now if one or two divisions of the House were entitled to any respect in reference to the earlier stages of this Bill, surely the last division, which decided triumphantly against the Bill, might with at least as much fairness, be quoted by him as conclusive against the House giving its sanction to the measure on the present occasion. It was true that the House of Commons did suffer the Bill to pass through two of its stages; but it was equally true, that on the last and most momentous occasion, the House decided by a large majority against the Bill; therefore, the hon. and learned Gentleman could obtain nothing from the precedent to which he had referred. In these days of change, any change was in itself a sufficient recommendation to the great body of the people. It mattered not what it was so that it was a change; but what was the change in the present instance? The hon. and learned Gentleman told them that the Bill he wished to introduce was the same that he brought in during the last Session of Parliament. Now the Bill of last Session proposed to repeal the Act of Supremacy, to legalize the monastic orders, and to allow the prelates of the Church of Rome to assume the titles of the established bishoprics of this country. [Mr. WATSON: The Bill does not propose the repeal of the Act of Supremacy.] But if it did not do so technically and literally, it did so substantially. It left it optional to parties differing from the established religion to take the oath of supremacy or not; and at any rate it legalized the monastic orders, and allowed the prelates of the Roman Church to take the title of the established sees of the country. The Bill proposed to remove certain provisions from the Statute-book, which at the time of the passing of the Act of Emancipation it was deemed advisable to introduce into that measure. If then it was felt to be necessary, in 1829, to introduce provisions for the security of the Church and Constitution of the country against the dangers which were apprehended, he asked the House not now to suffer those provisions to be repealed, and to remove that security which was supposed to be in danger in 1829. He (Sir R. Inglis) felt that, under the circumstances, he should not be discharging his duty if he suffered such a Bill to be brought in as a matter of course, and in the manner proposed by the hon. and learned Gentleman.

Sir G. GREY hoped, that, having protested against the Bill, his hon. Friend (Sir R. Inglis) would not think it necessary to insist upon a division; for the House had given leave to introduce a Bill for a similar object on two previous occasions; and he thought, therefore, that the best course to be now taken, was to allow the measure to be brought in, and to discuss its merits when it was properly before them.

Mr. SHAW wished to know what the Bill proposed to do beyond what was done by the Act passed in the last Session?

Mr. WATSON replied, that his Bill of last year embraced all that was contained in the Bill of the Government, as well as that which was contained in the present Bill; and the House would recollect that that Bill was divided into two Bills. The penalties mentioned in the Supremacy Act were repealed by the Act of the right hon. Baronet opposite (Sir James Graham); but there were certain infringements of the Act of Supremacy, which were still an offence at common law, and the main object of the present Bill was to repeal those penalties which affected the regular clergy of the Church of Rome.

Colonel SIBTHORP said, if his hon. Friend divided against the introduction of the Bill, he should feel it his duty to support him; and upon every future stage of the measure he should give it his decided, his most determined opposition; for he could never consent that the Church of England should be undermined by the tricks or manœuvres of any Ministry or party whatever.

Leave given. The Bill to be brought in by Lord J. Manners and Mr. B. Escott.

FLOGGING IN THE NAVY.

Mr. HUME moved—

"That there be laid before this House, a Copy of the Returns of Corporal and other Punishments on board each of Her Majesty's Ships in the Royal Navy, in each year from the 1st day of January, 1844 to the 31st day of December, 1846, stating the name, rating, nature of the offence, date of punishment, the number of lashes, and remarks of commander in chief or senior officer, as to any excess of punishments or otherwise, according to the Schedules published and ordered in the Admiralty Instructions, dated the 1st day of January, 1844, for the Government of Her Majesty's Naval Service; stating, also, the number of Seamen and Marines employed in each year, and the average number flogged; distinguishing those with and those without trial by Court Martial; distinguishing the number of Commissioned and Warrant and Petty Officers; also, specifying the names of Her Majesty's Ships and Vessels, and the name of the Commanders in which no corporal punishments have been inflicted in any of these years."

Mr. WILLIAMS seconded the Motion.

Captain BERKELEY could assure the House, on the part of the officers of the British navy, that they had no wish whatever to inflict more punishment than they could prevent. He must say that that constant interference on the part of Members of that House—that constant telling to seamen that they were subject to inflictions of which they had not before complained—was likely to subvert the best interests of the British Navy, and bring the service into disrepute. To show how unfair it was to draw conclusions from the amount of punishment inflicted at one short period as compared with another in an officer's ship, he might adduce an instance, which he himself remembered, of a sailor being condemned to be flogged round the fleet: the ship of the officer under whom the sailor served was excepted, on account of the excellent discipline which the officer maintained in his vessel. That was a compliment which the gallant officer highly valued, and well he might; but shortly afterwards that same officer was given another ship, in which the same excellent discipline had not been previously maintained, and for the first three months he was in command, he was obliged to inflict more punishment than he had ever before inflicted. Now, how unjust would it be to take this latter period of that officer's command as a criterion of his treatment of his men. It was too much the habit of hon. Gentlemen to place before the public and the House exaggerated accounts of occurrences, without feeling responsible for their ever having taken place; and he must say, that to hold officers up before the country, and to make that House a place of appeal from the Admiralty, and tell a man over and over again who had been honourably acquited by a court-martial, that he had been guilty of cruelty—and he would say, that if he had been a member of that court-martial, he would have come to the same opinion that the members of it had—to pursue such a course, was to act contrary to the best interests of the Navy. With respect to the Motion of the hon. Gentleman, he had no objection to give the returns, but they were not to be retrospective.

ADMIRAL BOWLES said, it was impossible, after seeing the manner in which hon. Gentlemen brought forward, on every occasion, most invidious remarks respecting the officers of the Army and Navy, and seeing the unscrupulous and unconstitutional manner in which hon. Gentlemen attacked, on all occasions, the best public men, and prepossessed all whom they could influence against officers who had done their duty—it was impossible to view their proceedings without jealousy and suspicion, For his own part, if he were to divide the House alone on the Motion, he would oppose it.

MR. WARD said, he was most unfortunately absent from his place when the hon. Member near him introduced this Motion; but he felt bound to state that it was the feeling of the Board of Admiralty that what the Army did, the Navy both could and ought to do; and as the returns of the number of corporal punishments in every regiment in the service had already been conceded by his right hon. Friend the Secretary at War (who was prepared to lay the returns of the first year on the Table in the course of the evening), so he thought, with every respect to the high character and good intentions of the officers of the navy, that they ought to be prepared to submit to the same conditions, and to grant the returns, provided they were not made retrospective. Publicity, he thought, would prove a wholesome check; for whilst it would not intimidate the good officer, it would make the man of hasty and impetuous temper cautious in the punishment he inflicted. Whilst he could not consent to give these returns for the last two years, when no notice or caution had been given that they would be expected—whilst this was the case, he was directed to assent to the Motion prospectively, and to state that in future returns precisely similar to those ordered in the Army should be laid upon the Table by the Admiralty, giving the punishment inflicted in each ship. He anticipated no evil from such a step. He admitted it involved a great change; but if they did retain the power of inflicting punishment at all (and even his hon. Friend who made the Motion admitted that was necessary), they could only maintain it by convincing every reasonable person that it was subject to the same check which the excercise of power in every department was subjected to. He held in his hand a letter from Sir Hugh Pigott, commanding the station on the western coast of Ireland, the contents of which would, he was sure, be so agreeable to the House, that he needed no apology for referring to it. The letter requested him, in handing in the return for the December quarter, to direct the attention of the Lords of the Admiralty to the gratifying fact, that in thirteen vessels of war, with 1,400 supernumerary marines under his command, not an offence had been committed calling for the infliction of corporal punishment, notwithstanding the harassing duties which they had had to perform, and the temptations to which they had been exposed in their frequent visits to the shore for the transfer of provisions from the vessels to the various depôts in the neighbourhood. The letter also stated, that in the former return for the September quarter, but one instance of corporal punishment had occurred. That only showed what might be done by a good system, in maintaining a power which must be maintained, which could not be dispensed with, but which he believed would be exercised with greater discretion than it ever had been hitherto, when it should become certain that the amount of punishment inflicted would be made the subject of an annual return. He admitted that they could not judge from the experience of a month or two; but when they found a great amount of flogging kept up for a long period of time, there must be something wrong either in the officer or the crew. He might add, that when his right hon. Friends came into office, an order was made, in August last, to the effect that no punishment should be inflicted on a station, without the consent of the senior officer in command. He was prepared to give his hon. Friend returns which he believed he would be contented with, viz., returns precisely similar to those which his right hon. Friend the Secretary at War was prepared to lay on the Table.

SIR C. NAPIER said, he regarded the former Motion of the hon. Member for Montrose, relative to punishments on board the *Amazon*, as unwise, ungenerous, and unjust towards Captain Stopford, who, he was glad to say, had been honourably acquitted by the court-martial. In acceding to the present Motion, he did not at all agree with the Secretary of the Admiralty in making the returns prospective, because the officers had had no warning that such returns were to be given. He said, let returns be given for as many years back as the hon. Member thought proper; and from what he knew of the service, he was sure no officer need be ashamed to have his punishments brought before the House to be searched into as much as the House thought fit. The remarks of the Secretary of the Admiralty would only encourage the idea, that captains of the Navy were tyrants unfit to be entrusted with discretionary power. The Secretary of the Admiralty had also referred to what he must call an extraordinary order—that the captain of a ship on a foreign station was not to inflict a punishment until it had been submitted to the senior officer in command. Why where were they to find the senior officer? There might be no opportunity of communicating with him. Why, an officer in the Mediterranean would have to apply to Sir William Parker at Lisbon before he could inflict a punishment. Surely the Secretary to the Admiralty had said so. He thought that the regulation made by the Admiralty many years ago—before 1844—was the best. That order required all naval officers to make returns of punishments regularly every quarter to the Board of Admiralty; similar returns also had to be presented to the Commander-in-chief, and if too much punishment had been inflicted, it was quite competent for either of those authorities to call the officer to account; and he knew that in some cases officers had been called to book when an excessive amount of punishment appeared in the returns. He did not object to the present Motion. Whether the hon. Member introduced it from a love of popularity, or from any other cause, he did not know; but he could assure the House that throughout the whole British navy the wish of the captains, with a very few exceptions, was, if possible, to abolish corporal punishments. Such being the case, whilst he did not oppose the Motion, he thought the matter would be best left in the hands of the Navy.

Admiral DUNDAS: Permit me to explain to the House what my hon. Friend the Secretary to the Admiralty intended to say. Few men who had been so short a time in the Admiralty could have got up their work so well as he has done. I only wish to say that the order to which my hon. Friend referred is, that every punishment in Portsmouth, Plymouth, and Sheerness, must be countersigned by the admiral before it is inflicted. [Sir C. Napier: More shame if it is so.]

Mr. WILLIAMS said, if naval officers had conducted themselves in the admirable manner described by some of the previous speakers, he could not conceive why the gallant Commodore should object to the returns. [Sir C. Napier: I did not object.] He ridiculed the idea that discipline could not be maintained on board a man-of-war without flogging. Those who supported that doctrine seemed to have less confidence in the commanders of ships of war than in those of merchantmen. The number of ships in the mercantile marine was ten times larger than that of ships of war, and millions and millions' worth of property was intrusted to the care of their captains; and yet, although they had the power to flog, it was a rare thing to hear of that power being exercised. He thought the course taken by the Government in granting these returns, would raise the character of the Navy. It would teach the seamen to revere the flag of their country, and they should not see them, as in the last war, driven by flogging and harsh treatment to serve under the banner of the enemy.

Mr. S. HERBERT suggested that his hon. Friends opposite would have acted more wisely, if they had agreed at the Board of Admiralty more definitely what were the returns they were willing to grant, rather than come to the House with each of them of a different opinion. He certainly did think that checks upon the exercise of the power of flogging ought to exist; but at the same time, the question ought not to be argued as if flogging was not permitted elsewhere but in the roya Navy. It was felt to be the only means of maintaining a discipline necessary for the safety of a vessel during its lonely transit across the Atlantic or other oceans, many miles apart from land and the civil authorities; and the power of flogging was given to captains of merchant ships. The civil law also sanctioned the infliction of corporal punishments in particular cases to repress crime; and that House, within the last two or three years, had passed two measures authorizing corporal punishments as a means of preventing crime, and it had been found to be entirely successful. They had passed a Bill which enacted corporal punishments as the means of putting down attacks upon Her Majesty; and a second Bill for the same purpose, in cases where some half idiots, for the sake of personal notoriety, destroyed works of art which were publicly exhibited, as in the British Museum. In both these instances, corporal punishment had been successful in the great object for which all punishment was designed, namely, the prevention of crime. The House, then, ought not to be carried away with the cry that a custom so abhorrent to the feelings of every one, ought to be abolished in the Navy, as if that were the only place in which it was inflicted. There was a wide difference, too, in corporal punishments, and in the manner in which they were inflicted, in the army and in the navy; and therefore it was no argument to say, that, because the return of punishments in the army was made, a similar return for the navy ought to be given. If the House wished to know the system of discipline, he thought every end would be answered by a general return of the numbers who had undergone punishment, and the crimes for which it had been inflicted. But when they required the returns to specify the particular nature of the offences, they constituted themselves judges, and the officers who feared censure would be making friends with hon. Members to make speeches and a flourish in their favour. They would destroy the service when they taught the sailor to look to other authorities than the Crown both for reward or blame, and the officer to regard the decision of a professional tribunal as to professional conduct as not a final decision. If the Government, however, thought fit to grant the returns, he should not divide against them. They were the persons who represented the Crown, and had, doubtless, well considered what they should give and what they should refuse. He, however, did not think that officers ought to punish or award pardon for offences with a view to returns to be made to the House of Commons; they ought to be actuated by no other motive than a sense of duty.

Mr. FOX MAULE said, that in the observations his right hon. Friend had just made, he had overlooked the fact of a return having been consented to by Government with reference to the army at the close of the last Session, upon which his hon. Friend the hon. Secretary to the Admiralty proposed to frame a similar return for the navy. When they remembered the circumstances under which the subject of corporal punishment, both in the army and the navy, was brought under the consideration of the House last Session—and the deep interest which was taken by the people, from one end of the country to the other, as to the effects of corporal punishment which had been inflicted in the army at that time—he thought the House would admit that any returns that could be granted of the number of punishments which took place either in the Army or Navy, and of the manner in which those punishments were awarded and inflicted, which would not be injurious to the respective services, ought to be granted by the Crown. With that feeling, and being convinced, from his acquaintance with the army, that it would do no possible injury to the service, he had consented at the close of the last Session to give a return to the House of the number of corporal punishments which were inflicted in the Army, naming the regiments in which they had taken place, but abstaining from giving the names either of the officers who composed the courts by which sentence was passed, or of the parties upon whom the punishment was inflicted. He (Mr. F. Maule) still adhered to the opinion that punishments in the Army ought to be submitted to the test of public opinion. He said this, not only as a Member of that House, but as having served for some years in the Army; and he maintained that no injury would be done to the service if the public were acquainted with every punishment which took place in the ranks of the Army. Those punishments were inflicted under the law by competent tribunals; and, therefore, so long as he had any voice in the matter, it certainly would not be raised to withhold any information he could give the public on the subject. Not only was he prepared to afford this information with reference to corporal punishments, but he should be quite prepared to lay before the House a detailed statement of the whole system of military imprisonment, of the number of persons who passed through our military prisons, of the committals and recommittals which took place, and generally of the effects which that system had upon the discipline of the army. From such a course, he was sure, no officer of the British Army would dissent; and, he might observe, that, since the 13th of August, when he (Mr. F. Maule) assented to the returns to which he had alluded, he had received no complaint from any officer of the Army that he had allowed the production of returns which were likely to be injurious to the service. He would suggest that his hon. Friend (Mr. Hume) would do well to take the returns in the form in which they would be laid before the House, in compliance with the Motion of the hon. Member for Winchester. In the course of a few days those returns would be placed upon the Table of the House.

SIR R. PEEL conceived that the subject of military discipline was a proper matter of consideration for the House of Commons. They ought to know what progress was made in the abolition of a punishment which they all desired. Notwithstanding the high authority that had been referred to, he should decidedly doubt the policy of laying on the Table of the House of Commons the particulars of each offence, with the names of the officers. [Mr. F. MAULE: The names of the regiments, not of the officers.] But the names of the regiments would disclose the names of the officers. The argument of the hon. and gallant Officer (Captain Berkeley) had convinced him that they might draw erroneous inferences from the returns. The same officers had been able to maintain discipline without corporal punishment, who, under other circumstances, were compelled to inflict it. If the House of Commons were to interfere, by examining into each particular case of punishment, the discipline of the service would be materially interrupted. If, however, the Government did not oppose these returns, he should not be disposed to oppose them; whilst he said, that he thought the modification proposed by the Secretary to the Admiralty was a most dangerous one. The hon. Gentleman said, he would grant the return prospectively, but not retrospectively — that he would not give it for the past two years, but was willing to give it for the next two years; because the officers could not have been aware that it would have been called for, and that their names would be presented to the House of Commons. Now, if the House sanctioned that, he thought a great reflection would be cast, first upon naval officers, and next upon the Board of Admiralty. It was his conviction, that, generally speaking, the officers of the navy wished these punishments to be abolished. A wrong-headed man might wish still to inflict the punishment; but, he believed, the officers of the Navy generally wished them to be abolished. That also must be the desire of the Board of Admiralty. But the Board of Admiralty had a most effectual check against any improper punishment on the part of the naval officers. Let them, if they found the power was abused, or that an officer could not maintain discipline without resorting to severe punishments—that was, without carrying them to excess; for he denied that in every case it was to be presumed they might have been avoided—let them mark the disapprobation of the Crown at the conduct of that officer, and teach the service to look to the Crown, and not to the House of Commons. He was, therefore, decidedly of opinion, that if abuses had prevailed, and the returns had to be given, they ought to know it; but he did not believe, with respect to these returns, they would be discreditable either to the officers or to the Navy. He thought, however, it would be discreditable to say they should not be given now, but should be given in future, when the officers would be aware that their names would be printed, and the House of Commons might exercise some power over them. This would be saying, indirectly, that the House of Commons was to have some direct and immediate control over the service. He hoped, therefore, if the returns were to be granted, they would, in justice to the service and the Board of Admiralty, be granted as moved for.

MR. COWPER said, he thought his hon. Friend had been misunderstood. What he understood him to say was, not that he would give these returns, but that prospectively he would give another return, not identically the same, but one which the Admiralty could allow to be made public. [Sir R. PEEL: Surely the hon. Gentleman said these officers had had no caution.] What caught his attention was, that, as returns had been already given for the Army essentially different from those moved for, so his hon. Friend believed that he could frame similar returns for the Navy, which were calculated to inform the public more justly than those moved for. He thought, therefore, his hon. Friend's proposition was not liable to the objections made to it by the right hon. Baronet.

MR. GOULBURN said, as there appeared to be so much difference of opinion amongst the Members of the Board of Admiralty themselves respecting these returns, he thought, before the House came to a decision, the Board should decide among themselves, and state to the House the precise returns they thought ought to be given. He hoped the returns so agreed on would not be liable to the objections he felt to the returns moved for, and still more strongly to those the Government assented to.

Lord J. RUSSELL: I understood my noble Friend at the head of the Board of Admiralty, that he thought, with the concurrence of that Board, that there was no objection to give returns of each ship, as similar returns had been given with regard to each regiment in the Army. I conceived that as he is the resposible head of that department, no doubt the question had been seriously considered, and that there was no objection. But, Sir, what would have been said if the opposite line had been taken—if the Government had said it was impossible to give these returns ? Insinuations would have been thrown out, and more mischief has already been done by these discussions than could have arisen by the production of the returns. I have seen on many occasions that the concealment of certain facts induces the public to conceive that enormities exist in the various branches of the military and naval services, while, were the whole circumstances known, it would be seen at once that the officers were quite blameless. I am not, then, in general, a friend to concealment ; I do not think it is any great advantage to the public service; and this being the fact, no difficulty was made about the military returns. But with regard to the returns of punishment on board each ship, a difficulty did arise, as there is some difference in the constitution of the Navy and the military system of discipline. There could be no reason for concealment in the Army, which is always on land, and generally within reach of the various stations ; but with respect to the Navy, the difference of circumstances required somewhat different treatment. I think my noble Friend at the head of the Admiralty was perfectly right to consent to the returns being given, such returns as have been described, and I myself see no objection to their production. I am quite satisfied that with regard to the officers of the Navy, my hon. Friend opposite has given them a true character; and I feel convinced that they do not exercise the powers—the vast and terrible powers—placed in their hands with undue severity. In that opinion, Sir, I am confirmed by knowing that of the officer lately brought to a court-martial—I allude to Captain Stopford, against whom charges of exercising undue severity on board his ship were preferred—that in his case the charges were completely overthrown and disproved by the evidence produced. I agree with my hon. Friend, that it would be unfortunate that the returns for the years 1845 and 1846 should not be given, because the officers of the navy of that time, not expecting those returns would be moved for, might have acted less cautiously than otherwise. I have no such belief, and could not for such an assigned reason withhold the returns. I trust, however, that my hon. Friend the Member for Montrose will withdraw the Motion which he has submitted for the approval of the House. This Motion proposes that the names of commanders of vessels, on board which no corporal punishment was inflicted during those years, should be given ; thus holding up those officers to praise and commendation for their apparent discipline, whereas it might be that some of those commanders succeeded to ships where admirable discipline had been established by former officers, and therefore were less deserving of credit than those who probably might have inflicted corporal punishment. I cannot agree to any such Motion. I am willing, as I before said, to assent to the production of returns regularly proved and drawn up similarly to those respecting the Army; and I am confident that if corporal punishment is to be maintained in the Navy, as I believe it is necessary, it is desirable there should be no concealment of the facts, the production of which, instead of being dishonourable to the service, will be attended with honour and credit.

Colonel T. WOOD agreed with the right hon. Gentleman the Secretary at War, that public opinion should exercise influence on officers in command of districts ; but the first duty of an officer was to see that discipline was maintained, and the second that it was maintained with the least degree of punishment. He did not think it would be fair to distinguish those regiments in which corporal punishment was inflicted, from those in which none had taken place. Such a proceeding would be in the highest degree calculated to bring about a bad state of feeling, and to lead to breaches of discipline which might not be corrected without great difficulty.

Mr. HUME said, that after what had been stated, and the willingness shown by the Government to place the Navy returns upon the same footing as those of the Army, he considered he would be best consulting the object he had in view by not pressing for the returns. His object was not to gain popularity, for he was above that long ago, but to improve the condition of the Navy. He, therefore, begged to withdraw the Motion.

CAPTAIN HARRIS defended the officers of the navy against any charge of wishing to continue the practice of corporal punishment on board their ships. He begged to say that so far from desiring the continuance of the punishment, several eminent officers had advised the Government to diminish the punishment, as their desire was to see it gradually but safely abolished.

MR. FERRAND said, there was abundant evidence adduced to show that the Board of Admiralty presented nothing short of a state of mutiny; and whether it was to be brought back to a condition of discipline without the infliction of corporal punishment, was more than he could tell. The right hon. Gentlemen in the present Government connected with the Admiralty were themselves at variance, while their predecessors in the late Government were also at issue. It would, therefore, be very desirable that the House should come to some distinct resolution on the subject, to prevent future misunderstandings.

Motion withdrawn. House adjourned at half-past Twelve o'clock.

HOUSE OF COMMONS,

Wednesday, February 10, 1847.

MINUTES.] PUBLIC BILLS.—1° Roman Catholic Relief.

PETITIONS PRESENTED. By Mr. T. Duncombe, from Inhabitants of Finsbury, for Inquiry respecting the Rajah of Sattara.—By Mr. Christopher, from Solicitors of Lincoln, and Exeter, and by Sir John Duckworth, from Attorneys and Solicitors of Chesterfield, for Repeal of the Duty on Attorneys' Certificates.—By Mr. Duncan, from Dundee, for carrying into effect the Recommendations of the Select Committee respecting Lighthouses.—By Sir H. W. Barron, from Waterford, for Reduction of the Duty on Tea.—By Mr. T. Duncombe, from William Cobbett, a Prisoner in the Queen's Prison, for Inquiry respecting Affidavits.—By Mr. T. Duncombe, from Bradford, for Inquiry respecting the Anatomy Act.—By Mr. Cripps, from Solicitors of the Court of Chancery, for Inquiry respecting that Court.—By a great many Hon. Members, from an immense number of places, in Favour of the Ten Hours Factory Bill.—By Mr. Brotherton, from National Temperance Society, for Stopping the Manufacture of Intoxicating Liquors.—By Sir W. Somerville, from Drogheda Poor Law Union, for Alteration of Poor Law (Ireland).—By Mr. Frewen, from Guardians of the Cuckfield Union (Sussex), and by Lord John Russel, from the Worcester Union, for an Efficient Poor Law (Ireland).—By Mr. Newdegate, from Guardians of the Rugby Union, and by Lord J. Russell, from the Worcester Union, for Repeal or Alteration of Poor Removal Act.

FACTORIES BILL.

MR. FIELDEN moved the Second Reading of the Factories Bill.

MR. HUME opposed the Motion. He had expected that some Member of Her Majesty's Government would have risen, in the first instance, to have stated their views on this most important question. He could not conceive anything more unsatisfactory than for the House to meet, under the difficult circumstances created by this Bill, without the attendance of Her Majesty's advisers; and he held it to be their duty to state their views, seeing that upon a former occasion the noble Lord at the head of the Government ventured to differ on this question from some of his present Colleagues, and to divide against them. Under these circumstances, the least that those interested in this question expected was, that the noble Lord would have been in attendance as he had promised; for he had said, that when the time arrived, he should be prepared to state his views. It would materially conduce to the convenience of the House, if Her Majesty's Government would say whether they would oppose or support this Bill. Many hon. Gentlemen were extremely doubtful what course to pursue. Some were in favour of the measure, whilst others entertained a most decided opinion against it. He acknowledged himself to be one of the latter; for the measure, in principle, was opposed to all those which had recently obtained the sanction of that House. Some hon. Gentlemen—he did not think it was much to their credit—cast reflections upon the principles of political economy, not considering that it was by those principles that the best interests of the community were regulated. [Mr. FIELDEN: What are they?] His hon. Friend asked what these principles were? He would tell him. They were, that masters and men should be allowed to make what arrangement they pleased between themselves, both with regard to the length of hours and the rate of wages; and that Government should interfere as little as possible, except in every instance to remove prohibitions and protections. The only condition on which this right was acceded to was, that no man should carry it on to the injury of others. He had formerly had the support of his hon. Frend (Mr. Hindley), who was in favour of an Eleven Hours Bill, and he counted upon his assistance now. The man who proposed eleven hours was against ten hours. This question, however, involved matters of the most serious importance. Hon. Gentlemen might treat it, if they chose, as a party question; and he believed it was so treated by some. ["No, no!"] He hoped it was not; he had better hopes of the result, if he could only bring the unbiassed good common sense of the country to look at the question in a proper light. In the absence of the noble Lord at the head of Her Majesty's Government, he could only state his own views. Legislation, in his opinion, ought to be consistent. For a series of many years, legislation in this country had been upon the principle of protection. There was scarcely an interest in the kingdom, from the highest to the lowest, which had not sought and obtained protection. For 300 years laws had been passed, interfering with the labourer and with the employer, with this very view. But the evils arising from this practice had become so severe, and at the same time so obvious, that, by common consent, a great proportion of the laws so enacted, were repealed two or three and twenty years ago; and he could not help thinking that hon. Gentlemen who supported the present measure, were proceeding on a course likely to add to the evils which he was sure they were anxious to avoid. They professed their object to be the welfare of the labouring community. They thought they knew better than the labourers themselves what were their interests. He repeated that any man who took upon himself to direct another in his ordinary affairs, told that other that he knew his affairs better than he himself did, and that he could manage them better. Now, he objected to that doctrine altogether. He held that the common sense of the working classes was capable of enabling them to take care of themselves; if it were not, let them be educated and better taught. He was an advocate for that species of education which should place them in the situation of being the best judges of their own interests; and he had yet to learn that this doctrine was not the true one. On every side he heard of their claims for universal suffrage—of the right of being represented in the House of Commons; yet these very men, who were the loudest in demanding the suffrage, which would enable them to take a part in deciding on the affairs of the nation, would appear, by this Bill, to say they were incapable of directing their own affairs; and, therefore, they desired the interference of legislation. This appeared to him one of the greatest contradictions it was possible to conceive. His hon. Friend (Mr. Fielden) on a former occasion, had presented to the House a petition signed by upwards of three millions of individuals, embracing a large proportion of the working classes of this country, in favour of a large extension of the suffrage; and he (Mr. Hume) had supported his hon. Friend on that occasion. He declared then, as he affirmed now, that he had too high an opinion of the intelligence of Englishmen belonging to the working classes, than to suppose that they were unworthy of the trust of sharing in the selection of representatives, as was generally thought. He, therefore, asked his hon. Friend (Mr. Fielden), when he came to address the House, to explain how it was that he now wished to introduce an Act of Parliament which should restrain the operations of the working classes, by laying down laws and regulations which were to prevent them from carrying on their labour as seemed to them best? There was a manifest inconsistency in this view, which required explanation. The Bill of the hon. Member seemed to require that as to the working classes there should be one measure for everybody—that everybody should be of the same height, the same length, the same breadth, and the same strength; if any one were too long, or too strong, he must be cut down; and if any one were too weak, or too short, he must be stretched out. Such a principle, he was convinced, could not succeed, if it should be adopted. What, he would ask hon. Members from Ireland, were two of the greatest wants reckoned among the evils of that country? Want of employment, and want of capital. Why was there want of capital? Because there was a want of confidence. And this want of confidence had been carried to a melancholy extent as regarded the interests of Ireland, and to a most injurious extent as regarded the interests of the State; because labour had been lost which might have been beneficially employed, and the portion which might have become useful, had, on the contrary, now become a burden. What then, he asked, might be the consequences of interference, on the part of the Legislature, on this occasion? If England alone had to supply the whole world with manufactures, he should not fear any consequences. Our capital employed immense masses of the people; and if they interfered with it to prevent its fair and full operation, they would most assuredly risk the removal of a certain portion of those employed by capital. Whatever induced any manufacturer either to lessen his capital, or to reduce the number of men he employed, to the extent of that reduction was the State injured, by the loss in the productions of the men so reduced, and by the loss of their wages. It might readily be conceived, that if England had the sole supply of the world with manufactures, as she had at one period, she might exact her own terms. The whole world must then be subordinate to her, as it was when she absorbed the carrying trade during the last general war; and there would have been no objections whatever to whatever rules and regulations were laid down in this country, seeing that, though they regulated the labour of other countries, they could not interfere. But what had since taken place? In America, for instance, what had been done there? Why, there were manufactories there which rivalled, if they did not exceed, ours. He had lately seen returns of the importation of American domestics into China and other parts of the east, and he found that they supplied a large portion of the manufactures which the very spinners who called for this Bill were employed upon. If the competition so created and going on were to continue, he apprehended that those who were asking for the limitation of labour to eight or ten hours, would find eight or ten hours to be much to their inconvenience. The House must recollect that it was not a slight matter to interfere with fixed capital embarked in manufactures. It was well known that after defraying the expenses of individual labour and interest on capital, owners of mills had fixed expenses which they could not avoid. They had therefore to calculate, besides having the competition of the Continent and of America, what their expenses were—whether they could, after returning interest upon the capital employed, and paying adequate wages, obtain a proper and fair amount of profit. Mr. Senior had pointed this out in the clearest and most satisfactory manner. That gentleman might be a political economist; he was proud to call him his friend, and to say he concurred in his chief opinions. If hon. Members had not read Mr. Senior's pamphlet upon the state of our factories, and upon the hours of labour in them, he invited them to read it. If they did, they would find this result collected from impartial examination of a number of mills, that ten hours paid only the expenses of the "plant" and the wages of labour, and that if work stopped at ten hours, there would be no profit on the capital invested. [An Hon. MEMBER: How long has that calculation been made?] This calculation was made four years ago, but nothing had since occurred to diminish its accuracy. The surplus, then, whether it was one, one and one-half, or two hours, beyond ten hours, was the only time from which a remunerative return for capital could be made, without which it could not be expected that men would carry on business. If this view were correct, as he believed it was, for it was supported by the opinions and experience of practical men, he asked the House, and he asked his hon. Friend himself (Mr. Fielden), whether factories could be carried on if those hours were taken away upon which the profit of the manufacturer depended? His hon. Friend, he knew, had no occasion to borrow money to carry on his manufactories at six, five, or three per cent. The very diversity of interest, however, increased the charge upon the manufactured article, and compelled the manufacturer, who was so situated as to be obliged to borrow, to carry the hours of labour to a greater extent in order to make up his returns. Was it every man who could obtain money at 3½ per cent? Many men who had 100,000*l.* in manufactures, and whose credit might be good, could obtain loans to carry on their business at 3½ or 4 per cent, whilst a poorer man, though an equally good manufacturer, and equally entitled to protection, might not be enabled to obtain the same accommodation under 5 or 6 per cent. Nay, when a check took place in the sale of any manufactured article, many who were not able to sell were obliged to resort to their bankers to get their bills discounted at 3 or 4 per cent, and renewed, until the interest chargeable upon the sum borrowed amounted to 7 per cent, or even more. Was the same rule to be applied in all these cases? He repeated, he was sorry that the noble Lord was not present, because to him he looked, as the leader of that House and the guide of Her Majesty's councils, for an answer. He was glad, however, to see the right hon. Member for Manchester (Mr. M. Gibson) in his place. He repeated that every interference which prevented men, whatever might be their talents, from employing their capital, and exercising their ingenuity under protection of the laws, in any manner they thought proper, was injurious and bad. In former days this was not the opinion of the Legislature; but twenty-five years ago it had fallen to his lot to submit to Parliament certain propositions affirming this principle, which the House of Commons adopted and acted upon. These propositions, one of which he would read, embodied the sound and correct principles of political economy; and the innovations which had since taken place were violations of those great principles. In May, 1824, the House of Commons affirmed these principles, and thereby swept from the Statute-book sixty or seventy Acts of a restrictive character. After having relieved trade and emancipated commerce, were they to be so insane as again to place themselves under shackles and trammels? It would be madness, and he could not understand his friends who contended that such a policy was for the benefit of the people. The resolution he referred to was agreed to by a numerous Committee of that House, consisting of fifty-one Members. Among them were Mr. Huskisson, Mr. Sturges Bourne, Lord Stanley, Sir H. Parnell, and others of great weight and eminence. They agreed to this resolution:—

> "It is the opinion of this Committee, that masters and workmen should be freed from all restrictions as regards the rate of wages and the hours of working, and that they be left at perfect liberty to make such agreements as they may mutually think proper; and that therefore all the statute laws that interfere in these particulars between masters and workmen should be repealed, and also that the common law which enacts that peaceable meetings of working men may be indictable for conspiracy should be altered."

The alterations in the law consequent upon this resolution had been most beneficial. They had been highly approved of by the working classes, as would be seen by his hon. Friend (Mr. Fielden), if he would examine the evidence taken before that Committee. He repeated, then, that hon. Gentlemen who wished to return to those laws were thereby alleging that the working classes were unable to see their own interests, and taking from them a discretion which they were capable of exercising. On these grounds, he felt very strongly against the present measure. He wished the Government and the Legislature to be consistent. If the resolution of 1824 were carried by a protection Parliament, what had taken place since? Had not the right hon. Baronet (Sir Robert Peel) introduced important measures upon the same principle? He was sorry the right hon. Baronet was not in his place, for he felt confident of his support; at all events, if he did not support his views, he would belie all the principles he had recently expressed, and stultify most of the acts of his life. Every Act the House had passed for the last three, four, or five years, had been to free industry, to emancipate capital, and relieve the mercantile interest from restriction: and it would be the height of injustice now, to say to men who were willing to work, "you shall not work except for such time as we permit." One man might like to work for twelve hours; another man for less; another for more, that he might support his mother, or his father. Then why should the law interfere? Parliament had no right to interfere either with labour or capital; and for his part he was prepared to sweep away every restriction that now remained, and to let one general and uniform principle of perfect liberty pervade our legislation. Having stated these general principles, he asked hon. Gentlemen to give him an answer to the following points: were they desirous that England should maintain her manufacturing superiority? If so, were they disposed to give fair play to capital and industry in this country? Were they aware of what was going on in Belgium and Germany? Was there any restriction to ten hours there? Was there any restriction in the United States? In the factories at Lowell they worked, in summer, twelve hours; and he had read a report drawn up by a committee of the legislature of Massachusetts upon a petition praying for a restriction in the hours of labour. It was a most sensible report:—

> "We cannot interfere," said the committee. "We admit the evil; we wish we could lessen the hours of labour to all classes; we wish that every man could maintain himself and his family by eight or nine hours of labour per day. But we find it cannot be done. Our manufacturers have competition to meet in neutral markets, and we must leave them to their own exertions."

The committee further stated, that the best means by which labour and capital could be employed, was to leave them free? If this principle were true in America, did it not hold good here? Undoubtedly it did; it was more emphatically in force here. He begged to caution hon. Gentlemen against doing anything to drive capital from its proper employment, and prevent the exportation of cheap articles of manufacture—for it was upon their cheapness and their goodness that the extent of our exports depended—and every individual who interfered with these, to the extent of his interference did an injury to the class of people whose labour was interfered with —and when once they brought the population to ruin by this injudicious course of legislation, it would be too late to say, "We find we have inflicted an evil upon them, we must retrace our course;" for they would then be reduced to the same helpless situation in which Ireland now was. These were serious considerations, and upon them he appealed to that class of politicians who considered that certain alterations should be made in our laws, because we were more heavily burdened than any other country. He asked them, if capital and industry were paralysed, upon whom the responsibility would rest for the evils which would follow? The hon. Gentlemen who advocated this measure, might think that they were the best protectors of the working classes; but he would not yield to the hon. Gentleman who brought forward this Bill, or any other hon. Gentleman, in the desire to see the great mass of the community happy. He wished to remove the load that pressed upon the poor man, and to put it upon the rich; and whatever interpretation might be put on his conduct in consequence of his opposition to this Bill, he would appeal to the common sense of any person whether he deserved to have such imputations cast upon him. Let them put their fingers on any one thing he had done during the last thirty years, and show from it, if they could, that his object was to press upon the poor man. During that period he had recommended that various changes should take place; but it would be found on examination, that there was not a single instance in which he had wished to press upon the poor. He might have been pertinacious—he might have been obstinate—which he admitted he had been on many occasions—in pressing upon the Government a reduction of expenditure and a change of taxation. This, indeed, had been the besetting sin of his life, if he had any. He was perfectly aware that he had given great offence to many individuals by the course he had adopted, and many had supposed that his interference in trying to stop some of the numerous rivulets which flowed from the public Exchequer, was owing to other motives than those by which he had been influenced; but he never cared what people asserted on that point, or what they did, provided they kept their hands off him. He begged them to look at the result of his labours, and by the result he was content to be judged. On that very ground he appealed, with all the zeal and anxiety possible, to hon. Gentlemen who, influenced, no doubt, by humane views, were supporting this measure—he appealed to them to consider whether its effect would not be to injure this country by interfering with its capital and the employment of labour. Ireland was at this moment suffering from the want of capital and employment. He cautioned the Legislature, then, to beware how they trammelled manufactures, or interfered with the enterprise going on in this country. They ought rather to let every man employ his capital as he thought best, provided he did no injury to his neighbour; and he could see no injury which resulted to his neighbour if he employed 20, or 30, or 500 working men, who were willing to work for him, and who were willing to make a bargain with him respecting that work, from year to year, or from time to time. It was forming, he repeated, a poor opinion of the working classes to suppose that they were unable to act for themselves in this matter. For himself, he had found among the great body of the working classes with whom he had come into contact, a greater degree of intelligence than the supporters of this Bill seemed to give them credit for. He suspected that the outcry in favour of this Bill was kept up by a set of individuals who were more influenced by a desire for their own enjoyment, and by a dislike to labour, than by any feeling for the rest of the community. At least, in any interviews he had had with workmen on this subject, he had never been able to extract from them any other intelligible reason for the change. They always flew off to the cases of children and young people, and talked of the necessity of doing this and doing that; but he found upon examination that all their anxiety centred in themselves. He cautioned the House to beware how they sanctioned rash experiments of this kind just now, when they saw the sister country suffering from the want of employment, and when they saw capital driven from her shores. Was this a time to try such an experiment upon this country? It was quite true that the House of Commons had sanctioned interference in previous instances; but he could be no party to the passing of any such measure as the present on the plea that this was not the first time they had interfered. He had fought against all these interferences—he was sorry to say without success—but he had done so honestly and on principle; and he now declared, not only had every such regulation been found injurious to the commerce of this country, and to the very parties who were supposed to be protected by them, but that to interfere and stop employment, and divert industry out of its natural and proper order, had been found injurious in every country. Hence it was that in America the manufacturers were working more than ten hours; hence it was, that in other States of Europe our rivals were working more than ten hours; and were we then to place our manufacturers in a different situation, in a more disadvantageous position? If we did, we should lay the foundation of evils which would destroy the greatness of this country. Much was said by the country gentlemen about the value of agriculture. Now, his opinion had always been, that our agriculture would become as worthless as that of Poland if it were not for our manufactures and commerce. He had always looked at any interference with the latter as dangerous in the highest degree. It was for these and for other grounds, which he had no doubt would be advanced by some of his hon. Friends in the course of the debate, that he now moved, and he sincerely hoped the House would adopt his Motion, that the Bill be read a second time that day six months.

Sir G. GREY said: Sir, it was not my intention to have addressed the House so early upon this question; but after the appeal of the hon. Gentleman who has just sat down to the Members of Her Majesty's Government, and the strong desire he has expressed to know the course they may take on the present occasion, I feel it due both to him and the House that I should at once state the course which I, as an individual Member of the House, am prepared to take. I believe every hon. Gentleman in this House is aware of the opinions which have been expressed by the several Members of the present Government, on the previous occasions on which this subject has been brought under the consideration of the House during the last few years; and they must also remember the statement made by the First Lord of the Treasury at the close of last Session, in answer to a question from the hon. Member for Finsbury, as to the principles upon which his Government would be conducted. I do not therefore believe that there are any who expect that on this occasion the Members of Her Majesty's Government should feel themselves bound to take one and the same course with regard to this measure. As to the remarks which have been made on the absence of my noble Friend the First Lord of the Treasury on the present occasion, I can only say that it was his intention to have been in his place to state his views on the question; and I have no doubt he will be here before the conclusion of the debate. I have just heard that he has been unavoidably detained, but that he will be here presently; and no one will believe that he can have any desire to shrink from a full and explicit avowal of his opinions upon this important question. The hon. Gentleman who has just sat down, has stated that he likes consistency in legislation. I hope he also likes consistency in public men. To his own consistency no possible objection can be taken. He at least has been uniformly consistent in his opposition to factory legislation; and his whole speech has been directed against the principle upon which the past legislation of Parliament has proceeded with regard to factory labour. To be consistent, however, in legislation, we ought rather to proceed than to retrograde, in the course on which Parliament has already entered. The present question is one not of principle but of degree. The question is, whether the point at which we have arrived, is the utmost limit to which we can safely proceed in the course we have adopted. But when my hon. Friend talks of consistency, I would ask him why he does not propose to repeal those Factory Acts which have been already passed? That is the real tendency of his argument; and I ask him to submit that issue plainly and decidedly to the House. The hon. Gentleman has referred to the report of a Committee of this House, to which I believe the consideration of the combination laws was referred, and he says, that in consequence of the report of that Committee, Parliament has swept from the Statute-book sixty or seventy Acts which contravened the principle that Committee laid down. That principle I believe a sound one; but why did not Parliament, in sweeping away those Acts, go the whole length the hon. Gentleman now recommends, and also sweep away those other Acts which he thinks ought to be removed, and thus completely enforce the principle of non-interference with labour? Parliament has not done so. It has made this an exceptional case; and I think there are just and sufficient grounds for making it an exceptional case. The subject has been so often discussed in Parliament, that I feel it would be unwarrantable in me to go at length into the consideration of the arguments which have been adduced on former occasions, and which will be, no doubt, again adduced in the course of this debate, against proceeding further in the course of legislation Parliament has already sanctioned with regard to factory labour. Nor, on the other hand, will I state those arguments which the advocates of the Bill proposed by the hon. Member for Oldham have urged. In doing so, I should be but treading an already beaten track, wearying the House with statements which are not new, and troubling hon. Gentlemen with the repetition of arguments which have been already addressed to them with far greater force, perspicuity, and ability, than I can bring to the consideration of the subject. The only new feature, as it appears to me, which the subject offers on the present occasion, and to which we ought to address our attention, is, what is the present feeling of the public mind with regard to this question; and what is the prospect of that final settlement of the question, which, judging from past professions, I confess, I was inclined to think would have taken place, but which, I regret to say, now appears more hopeless—I mean that settlement of it which would be most satisfactory to all the parties concerned, and which should be effected, not by Act of Parliament, but by mutual agreement between employer and the persons employed. From all the information I have been able to obtain on that subject, my hopes are disappointed as to the attainment of so desirable a result by means so very desirable and unobjectionable. It would be, I repeat, infinitely preferable that, from a sense of the common interests of the employers of labour and the operatives, both parties could agree upon the time to which labour in factories should be restricted, without appealing to the Legislature. But I am informed that the arrangements of this nature which have been made, are very few in number, and that even where they have existed for a time, they have subsequently ceased in consequence of an inducement held out, of a higher rate of remuneration by those millowners who continued to work for a longer period. Such is the nature of my information; and I will not deny that the advantage held out by increased wages, will not have the effect of inducing many who are employed at short time for lower wages, to accept in preference that employment which gives for longer hours of work higher wages. But this is not a fair test of the real feelings of the people. There are other questions, such as those of Sunday trading, or the early closing of shops, on which arrangements made by individuals, are defeated by advantages gained by others who refuse to be bound by those arrangements. I do not say we ought to legislate upon these matters; but I say it is an argument in favour of legislation, that you cannot get persons to agree by common consent to one general arrangement, so long as there are persons whose interest it is to set that arrangement at nought. Where the object in view is practically right, the interference of the Legislature may become advisable. What, then, is the state of this question? I do not think it can be denied that there is a great desire on the part of the great body of the people employed in factories to see this question settled by legislative interference; and, on the other hand, I fear that there is still a formidable and general feeling of opposition on the part of the employers of labour to the settlement of this question otherwise than by the interference of legislation. ["No, no!"] The hon. Gentleman says "No, no." I admit certainly that I received the other day a deputation from gentlemen in the cotton trade, in favour of the present Bill; and I was informed that that was the first occasion on which a deputation of millowners had stated their desire to promote a Bill for the further restriction of the hours of labour. They stated that their opinion was in favour of the measure, and that they represented the opinions of others, who were not present on that occasion. But, on the other hand, I have seen a statement made by the majority of the employers of factory labour, which has led me to suppose that a feeling of decided opposition to further interference on the matter existed; and those parties supported their views by arguments which I am sure will be urged with ability during this debate, and which it is impossible we should overlook in the consideration of this important question. But when I examine the chief arguments urged against further proceeding in the course already taken by the Legislature, I find those arguments generally consist of predictions as to the evil results which may follow from adopting, even in a modified degree, the proposal of the hon. Member for Oldham. I find, however, in looking back to the discussions which have taken place within the last few years on the subject of the regulation of factory labour, that the same predictions then as now were confidently addressed to the House and the country as to the loss and ruin that would follow from the interference of Parliament in a question of this nature; and I ask the House now to contrast those predictions with the actual results which have taken place. I ask any hon. Gentleman, however strenuous an opponent he may have been to legislative interference in this matter, whether he can affirm that the restrictions imposed by those laws on factory labour have produced prejudicial results, and whether he is prepared, on the ground of experience, to resist further interference? And if Gentlemen are not prepared to show that the results of past legislation have been prejudicial, I ask them to show some candour and forbearance towards others who doubt the anticipations which they at present express of the loss and ruin that must follow from the adoption of the present Bill. But it is not only that they cannot affirm that prejudicial results have arisen, but admissions have been made, even by those who are most opposed to further interference, of the positive benefits which have resulted from past legislation. The right hon. Baronet the Member for Dorsetshire (Sir J. Graham), who entertains strong and conscientious opinions on this subject, and who has stated them on former occasions with great ability, distinctly admitted last year that benefits had resulted from legislation up to the point to which it had at present been carried on this subject. That these results have been beneficial, nobody can doubt. I will take the case of children under eight years of age. Is there any man, I ask, who wishes to see children of that tender age again admitted, by the repeal of those restrictions, to take part in factory labour, or to see children between 8 and 13 years of age subjected to the same number of hours of labour as adults are? There can be no doubt that, looking to the physical and moral welfare of children of that tender age, beneficial results have followed—beneficial results in which we cannot too much rejoice, from the interference of the Legislature with regard to the class to which I have referred. And what has been the consequence with regard to capital and the profits of manufacturers? During recent years, while these Acts have been in force which impose the restrictions I have mentioned, increased comfort to the people has been produced, the means of education have been extended, and there has been, simultaneously with those results, a great increase in manufactured productions. I need not refer to the reports of the inspectors of factories which have been from time to time laid upon the Table, and which all concur in stating the beneficial results which have been derived from past legislation, and the vast increase of productive power and manufacturing wealth which has taken place at the same time. We have, therefore, in favour of the principle now proposed by the hon. Member for Oldham, the benefit of experience; and we are not now going to take a step in the dark, since we know what is the result that has followed from the restrictions already imposed. The real question we have to ask is, whether Parliament, having undertaken to decide what are to be the hours of labour during which females and young persons shall be employed in factories, we have discharged the responsibility we have taken upon ourselves? With regard to children, I think we have done our duty. [Mr. HUME: What children?] Children in the sense of the Factory Act—children from eight to ten years of age. [Mr. HUME: That is only in factories.] Does the hon. Gentleman mean that we should extend those restrictions to all classes of children in the country? My answer is, that where children are not employed collectively, and in a manner in which restrictions can be enforced—for instance, children employed in agriculture—it is impossible to adopt a rule for restricting labour; and even the strictest advocates of consistent legislation must admit that legislation must be limited by the bounds of possibility. Parliament has done then with respect to children, all that can legitimately and possibly be done in this respect, and with great advantage; children can be employed in factories but six hours a day, and Parliament has provided that during the remainder of their time means of education must be provided for them. Imperfect and limited those means may be; but every successive report of the factory inspectors shows that those means are increasing, and that the character of the education is improving, affording ground for expecting satisfactory results in the future generations that may be hereafter employed in factories. In stating this, I am happy to say that a great deal of the success that has attended legislation on this subject, is due to the employers of labour, and the willing co-operation they have given to carrying into effect those measures that were passed on the subject. The reports of the inspectors of factories, which have just been presented, show gratifying instances of liberality and benevolence on the part of the owners of factories in providing the means of education for the children in their employment. These are only an addition to instances mentioned in previous reports which have been laid on the Table of the House, and which are, no doubt, familiar to hon. Members. While I agree in advocating the principle of the Bill which has been presented to this House by the hon. Member for Oldham, I cannot concur with those individuals who would utter a single word calculated to create ill-feeling and differences between the employers and the employed, whose interests, I think, are indissolubly bound up together. It would be most unfair and unjust to impute, even to those who oppose the Bill most strenuously, the slightest want of feeling or sympathy for the interests of those persons who are in their employment. The conduct of the greater part of those Gentlemen completely negatives any such presumption; and I feel that that is one reason for proceeding with caution in the course which the hon. Member for Oldham invites us to pursue, in order that we may avoid creating dissension between the employers and the employed, but rather lead them both, if possible, by a sense of common interest, to concur in an arrangement which is compatible with the welfare of each. Advancing from the case of children to the case of young persons from 13 to 18 years of age employed in factories, I confess I have the strongest opinion that the Legislature, having taken upon itself the responsibility of fixing the hours of labour for this class, has failed adequately to discharge its duty with regard to them. When I see children of 13 years of age, who, from being allowed to work only six hours a day in a factory—the rest of their time being devoted to purposes of education and recreation—suddenly transferred, without any restriction to the class of adults, and employed during the same period of time for which adults of all ages are employed, I must say it appears to me that our legislation is defective, and that the existing restrictions are utterly inadequate to the attainment of the object for which they were devised. Under the circumstances stated, the education of the child is stopped when it is anything but complete, and when the long hours of working are calculated to prove injurious to its physical condition. I am not now speaking of adult labour, but of the labour of young persons from 13 to 18 years of age, who work 12 hours a day, involving an absence from home of fourteen hours and a half per day. I last year threw out the suggestion that some extension might take place of the period of childhood—using that term in the sense in which it was employed in the Factory Act—so as to give the benefit of short hours and of education to the class of which I am now speaking. I do not, however, wish to argue the question, or to support the Bill before the House upon false pretences. I admit that it is a fair argument against the Bill, that, looking to the number of young children and adult females employed in factories, the restriction of the hours of labour for them to ten or eleven hours, will practically restrict the working of male adults to the same period. I am not in the least disposed to deny that fact. There might, perhaps, be some exception to the rule; it might be possible in some few instances for adults to carry the work on in a factory for some time after children and females should cease to work; but, generally speaking, adult labour will be restricted to the same hours as those to which the labour of children and females is confined. This immediately raises the question on which much will probably be said in the course of this debate—the question, namely, of the employment of capital and foreign competition. I do not wish to enter particularly into the consideration of a question which has not yet been discussed; but, as I said before, when I look to the predictions of anticipated evil, and, indeed, in many cases, of certain ruin, which were made on former occasions, I must be permitted to doubt whether similar prognostications are now entitled to so much credit as those who use them would have us believe. Looking at the great increase of productive power in manufactures which has taken place during the time the present Acts have been in operation, I believe that the result which would attend the adoption of the further restrictions now proposed, would be a more equal distribution of the labour employed in producing manufactures throughout the year. That is my conviction. I may be mistaken; the point is, I admit, of the greatest importance; but I cannot satisfy myself that the predictions of injury and the calculations of loss are not very much exaggerated. I cannot anticipate that the limitation of labour proposed in the Bill of the hon. Member for Oldham, will produce the injurious consequences which, it is confidently asserted, will follow it. I, of course, must speak with some diffidence upon a matter with which I am not so practically conversant as those from whom these statements come; but, judging from the experience of the past, and looking to the energies of both our master manufacturers and workmen, I believe that competition may be successfully carried on under a further limited restriction; and that there will be no fulfilment of the predictions which really constitute the sole difficulty in the way of legislation on the present occasion. In dealing, however, with the question of adult labour, I cannot concur in the view taken by the hon. Member for Oldham as to the mortality which he supposed to be occasioned by the existing system in the manufacturing towns. I alluded to this subject when the hon. Member introduced his Bill, on which occasion he adverted to a document recently laid before the public—I mean the quarterly return of the Registrar General of Births, Marriages, and Deaths. I then stated, that I thought that the document in question did not afford evidence of increased mortality amongst persons employed in factory labour, as compared with those in any other branch of labour, and that this could not be justly assigned as a reason why the House should restrict the hours of labour in factories. I think the advantage to be derived from further rsstricting the hours of labour in factories, is the opportunity which it will afford to young persons—an opportunity which they do not now enjoy—not only of obtaining recreation suited to their age, but also of acquiring moral and religious instruction, from which, after the age of 13, they are now in a great measure debarred. Then, again, with respect to women — though being adults, and therefore of an age to enable them to make arrangements for themselves, they are less entitled to protection than children —I think that a system which takes them from their homes during the whole of the day, having scarcely more than the time required for rest in bed, is utterly destructive of domestic economy and social improvement. With respect to the question of health, however, I am by no means satisfied that the employment of females in factories is more prejudicial than many other kinds of employment. When I last alluded to this point in the House, I had not the report of the Registrar General in my possession; but I have since examined the two last quarterly returns of that officer, and I find that they confirm the view which I take of the subject; for though these documents show that the mortality in large and densely-populated towns, compared with the mortality in the same amount of population in rural districts, is very large, there is no evidence to prove that between towns where factory labour is carried on, and other towns where no factories exist, there is any such difference in the ratio of mortality. In the return for the summer quarter ending on the 30th of September, 1846, the Registrar General, after stating generally the remarkable mortality which prevailed throughout the country during the summer, and which he attributed to the excessive heat, enumerated particular towns in which the mortality had greatly exceeded the ordinary ratio, and in some instances was doubled. Amongst the places thus particularly referred to, were Maidstone, Brighton, Portsea, Winchester, Oxford, Clifton, Ipswich, Norwich, Plymouth, Burslem, Dudley, Walsal, Nottingham, Lincoln, Manchester, and Liverpool; a list from which no inference can be drawn, unfavourable to the general health of the factory districts, or raising the presumption that factory labour was in any degree the cause of the increased mortality. The Registrar General's return goes on to state that—

> " In the annual reports and quarterly returns, the causes of these differences in the mortality of the several parts of the country and the population, have been discussed. The high mortality of towns has been traced to crowded lodgings, dirty dwellings, personal uncleanliness, the concentration of unhealthy emanations from narrow streets without fresh air, water or sewers. The rapidity of decomposition, and the facility with which all kinds of animal matter become tainted, and run into putrefaction, enable us to understand, how in a summer like the past, in which the temperature was unusually high, the diseases referable to an impure atmosphere should be so prevalent and fatal."

Other parts of the report are to the same effect. Both of the Registrar General's reports are well worthy the serious attention of the House, with a view to the adoption of the remedial measures which are suggested by the writer; but I think that the facts stated with respect to mortality are not capable of influencing the decision of the House upon the question now before it. Results similar to those to which I have already referred, are given in the Registrar General's last quarterly return, ending the

31st of December, 1846. In that document the high rate of mortality observable in many parts of the country was ascribed to the prevalence of typhus, scarlatina, and other epidemic complaints, which had affected many towns, such as Newcastle, for instance, which appears to have suffered more severely than Manchester. In Liverpool, also, the mortality is quite as great, if not greater, than the mortality in towns where factory labour is carried on. I therefore feel justified in saying that the facts of the case amply confirm the view which I took of this part of the subject when the hon. Member introduced his Bill. The only passage in the Registrar General's returns which has any bearing upon the question before the House, is one in which he refers to the neglect of children by their mothers, which is, perhaps, carried to a greater extent in manufacturing districts than in other parts of the country. Still, looking not only to the Registrar General's returns, but to the reports of the respective registrars for Manchester and Liverpool, it appears that this species of maternal neglect is very prevalent in large towns, irrespective of the nature of the employment in which the mothers are engaged. The neglect to obtain medical aid, often essential to the preservation of life in the early stages of infancy, causes a great loss of life; and accordingly we find that the mortality amongst children under 3 and 5 years of age, is generally very extensive. I am not aware that it is necessary for me to address any further observations to the House. In what I have said, I have expressed my own individual opinions. I felt myself called upon to do so in consequence of the reference which the hon. Member for Montrose made, in the absence of my noble Friend, to the appeal which was made to him at the close of last Session by the hon. Member for Finsbury. In his answer to that appeal, my noble Friend, after stating what he thought essential with respect to a general agreement, amongst Members of a Government, upon questions of principle, claimed for himself and others freedom of thought and action as to matters of minor importance; My noble Friend expressed himself as follows, with reference to this particular question:—

> "But now with regard to the Factories Act; I have already stated what I think should be the latitude allowed by persons who, in the present day, meet together in a Cabinet. I have given my vote in favour of shortening the hours in factories. I stated, I believe, in the last discussion on that subject, that if we went into Committee, I should be in favour of shortening the time to eleven hours by law. If such a measure be introduced again, I shall give my vote in conformity with those that I have previously given."

My noble Friend then stated my agreement with him in opinion on this question, and the difference which existed between us and my right hon. Friend the present Secretary of Ireland, and added—

> "I think an Administration can be carried on usefully with regard to the general interests of the country—usefully with regard to many topics of administration, and yet not have identical views upon this question of the factories."

I have no doubt that in the course of this discussion, but certainly when the division shall take place, it will be apparent that a difference of opinion prevails amongst the Members of the Government with respect to this question—a difference which has all along been anticipated. Notwithstanding what has fallen from the hon. Member for Montrose, I still entertain my former opinion upon this matter—an opinion which I will not shrink from avowing. I am not insensible to the difficulties with which the question is beset, nor the magnitude of the interests which are involved in it. I feel that the magnitude of those interests, and the difficulties to which I have adverted, make it incumbent on us to proceed with great deliberation and caution in the course which the hon. Member for Oldham invites us to pursue. Agreeing with my noble Friend, I shall vote for the second reading of the Bill; agreeing further with him as to the necessity of exercising caution in a matter of this kind, and of not taking a single step which cannot be justified by past experience, I shall, if the Bill go into Committee, vote for the clause which restricts the hours of labour to eleven instead of twelve; and shall vote against the clause which proposes to limit the hours of labour still further at the end of the year by restricting them to ten. I admit that it would be most desirable to settle this question at once and for ever; but I am not sure that, if we were to adopt ten hours as the limit of labour, we should prevent future agitation, unless that limitation could be fixed by the general concurrence of all parties interested. There are even advocates for an eight hours Bill. If the masters and workmen were agreed with respect to the limitation to be placed upon the hours of labour, I think it would be safer to adopt the basis of their agreement, and take our stand upon it; but unfortunately that cannot be done. I must, therefore, take the course which I think best in the circumstances in which we are placed. I think that the Legislature has not fulfilled the obligations which it has taken upon itself relative to factory labour. I also think that, as far as Parliament has gone, its interference has been attended with advantage to all concerned. Believing this, I do not feel myself justified in saying "No" to the second reading; but, at the same time, I cannot go the full length proposed, because I think it is necessary to act with caution in a matter of such importance. I, therefore, vote for the second reading, with the intention, as I have already stated, of opposing, if the Bill goes into Committee, the clause which restricts at a future period the hours of labour to ten.

MR. BANKES observed, that the intentions of the Government had now been ascertained, and that it was satisfactory to know the question was not regarded in the light of a political or party one. It was not the case of an Opposition making an instrument of a Bill in order to annoy the Government; for it was a fact, that the head of the Government was prepared to give the second reading his support, and to vote for its going into Committee; and although the Government were not disposed, at the present moment, to aid those who asked for a Ten Hours Bill, they were not prepared to say, that, under no circumstances, at some future time, that description of legislation might not be the proper one. He believed he was authorized in saying, that those who sought for a Ten Hours Bill had not entered into any compromise. But if it were the pleasure of the Government to command all the strength which perhaps they might have the means of summoning, and pass the measure in the form of which they approved, it would be a satisfaction to those who asked for more to obtain thus much; and it would not be unsatisfactory to the public to have a year or two of experience to satisfy them, that so far from any loss being sustained, there would be in this further step of legislation a gain to all, in the same manner as gain had hitherto resulted from every step that had been taken towards reducing the restrictions upon factory labour. Though he regretted that the matter had not been made the subject of private arrangement, he could not say that he was disappointed in the expectation that such arrangement would be made; for he did not anticipate that result, although he had the highest authority for saying, that an arrangement of the kind was expected by one of the greatest opponents to the measure under discussion. He did not see that hon. Gentleman now in the House; but he was in the House since the commencement of the debate, and he had reason to believe he was in some adjoining chamber of the House at the present moment, and he, therefore, would not scruple to speak of the hon. Member for Durham as if he were present. [*Mr. Bright at this moment made his appearance.*] On the 23rd of May, last year, the hon. Member for Durham stated, in his place, that the proper way would be for the operatives to seek the effect of a Ten Hours Bill by arrangement with their masters. They desired it; and the hon. Member admitted they ought to have had it if they could get it by that means. Had those means been sought, or had any means been sought? and if they had, would the hon. Member for Durham say why they had failed? Had the proposals been made by the operatives to the masters? or had proposals been made by the masters to the operatives, with respect to that arrangement which the hon. Member admitted was so desirable—admitted was so just and right? or had the hon. Member changed his opinion from that time to the present? The hon. Gentleman appeared to have retained his opinion up to a late period. The hon. Member had been subjected to many questions lately—since he put himself forward as a candidate for the great commercial city of Manchester. The hon. Member had stood prominently forward, and openly courted the inquiry of those who might wish to hear his opinions; and, among other questions put to the hon. Member in December last, he was asked, whether he did not consider the necessity of time being allowed for education with regard to young persons in factories? And, in answer to that question, he said—

> "Well, I am quite certain that the man who works ten hours a day is much more likely to be educated than the one who works twelve. I do not differ upon this point; but I differ on the point, whether a reduction of time ought to be carried out by the Legislature, or by a regulation between the masters and the operatives themselves."

Had he quoted the hon. Gentleman right? [MR. BRIGHT: That is correct.] He was, then, justified in asking the hon. Member, whether he had made any endeavour to promote that adjustment which, in the month of May last, he had stated to be not only right, but just? Had he, between

May and December, made any such attempts? Between December and February, had the hon. Member made any such endeavour? or did he know of any such endeavour having been made? Was there ever, or could there ever have been, any period more favourable for such an adjustment, when the mills were partly closed—when the hours of labour were shortened, not by any mutual agreement entered into between the masters and the operatives, but shortened from other causes, which he would not at the present moment inquire into, but which showed, in point of fact, that no adjustment had been made. If it were the fact that no effort had been made for this purpose, what chance was there that that arrangement would be made now? There had been time for making the experiment; and since the hon. Member said that it ought to have been done, what chance, he again asked, remained that it would be done at all? The hon. Member for Durham was now a candidate—undoubtedly he had every right to be so—for the representation of one of the largest and most commercial cities in the country, the city of Manchester. The hon. Member might not have been in the House when a petition was presented, signed by 22,000 persons residing there, and with the leave of the House he would read the prayer of that petition. The petitioners said that they deeply sympathized with the factory workers in that large and important manufacturing city, many of whom were of tender years, shut up in a close room for a period in each day that was quite incompatible with their nature, and calculated materially to impair their growth; and they added, that owing to the long hours of labour these young persons were debarred from all means of enjoying the benefits of religious or secular education; that in consequence of the long hours of which the petitioners complained, the factory operatives were in a worse position than any other artisans, by which their physical frame was deteriorated; and if no relaxation were afforded, they would be mere representatives of the human body, without any of the vigour which should accompany it. They prayed therefore that the Legislature would pass a Ten Hours Bill without further delay. These sentiments emanated from 22,000 persons whom the hon. Member for Durham sought to represent in Parliament. True, they had no votes, but they were still the persons whose opinions and feelings he would represent. If the hon. Member, would, therefore, wish to please his future constituents, let him vote for this Bill, and thus render himself a more worthy candidate for their suffrages than he was at present. The hon. Member said last year that this was a fit and proper measure, which ought to be by some means adopted. There might be people in Manchester, perhaps, more powerful than the individuals whose names were appended to this petition; but he would not for a moment suppose that this consideration would influence his conduct now. He had, however, to recollect, that it was the expressed opinion of the hon. Member that this measure ought to pass; and, as it could not pass in the way of adjustment and regulation between the employers and the operatives, he (Mr. Bankes) called upon the hon. Member now to fulfil the pledge which he gave, and to carry out the measure by the only means left open, namely, a legislative enactment. A pamphlet had been circulated, which, although published two years before, had been only sent to him that day. That pamphlet contained grave charges against a most hon. person, and, containing such charges, he thought that it ought to have been circulated earlier, if at all. It was entitled, *A Report of the Central Committee of the Association of Millowners engaged in the Cotton Trade.* Now he would not allude to the personal charges which that circular contained against this hon. person, but he would to one passage which he happened to glance at, for he had had no time to examine carefully the contents of the document. That passage stated—

> "It is useless to discuss whether the present arrangement of twelve hours a day for five days, and nine hours on Saturday, is precisely the best limitation for labour. It is the limit which Parliament has long since established, and by which it is right to abide."

Now, the House would permit him to ask why it was "useless to discuss?" Was it useless to discuss this question? Could there be a better occupation of their time than to discuss whether that which was found a benefit to the people to a certain extent, should not be further extended, if any further additional benefit could be conferred? Could the House be better employed than in extending still further a measure which had been already found good? The quotation went on: "Usage and habit have accommodated themselves to this period." Why, that was said of the slave trade; "usage and habit" had existed there for a long time, but that was no reason why that usage and habit should be permitted to continue. "Upon the continued certainty of this limitation, the master manufacturer has based his calculation of a profitable return." Why, what right had the master manufacturer to base his calculation on this limitation? Had not this been a constant subject of inquiry—of proper inquiry—year after year? Had it not been constantly agitated in that House, and most justly agitated? Was there any reason why the master manufacturers, when the former law was passed, should speculate upon no further alteration of the law in all time coming? The hon. Member for Montrose had been pleased to say that he had got one besetting sin, and that was his universal advocacy of all reductions in taxation and retrenchments in expenditure. But the hon. Member had another besetting sin, and that was his determination to look with such intensity on one side of the question, that he omitted altogether to look at the other. Now, when the hon. Member for Montrose supported the resolution of 1824 to which he referred, he doubtless thought it the concentration of all human wisdom; but these Acts were based upon no abstract proposition; they were passed with caution; and their results had been tested by experience—Acts reducing the labour of those under thirteen years of age from seventy-four hours a week to thirty-six, and that of young persons above that age from seventy-four to sixty-nine. All these concessions had been universally admitted by every one but the hon. Member for Montrose to be attended with the happiest success, without any counterbalancing inconvenience to any of the parties interested. If the hon. Member for Montrose would but consider the matter fairly, he would find that the result of these restrictions were not at all unfavourable to our manufactures or to our commerce, For while in 1815 there were but 6,000 bales of cotton consumed weekly, in 1846, after the passing of these measures, the quantity of cotton consumed was no less than 30,000 bales per week, being an increase of no less than 400 per cent. "Oh, but," says the hon. Member for Montrose, "these people do not know their own interest." Well, then, if they were ignorant, why not let them be educated, and afford time for educating them? That was precisely what the advocates of short time proposed. At that moment, when an extended measure of education was being introduced into the other House of Parliament, surely some arrangement should be made by which the young factory operative, in common with all classes in the country, might be benefited. The measure, as far as the factory workman was concerned, was an insult to him, for it provided a large sum for educational purposes, from the benefits of which he would be altogether debarred. The hon. Member for Durham admitted that the man who worked ten hours, had more time for the purposes of education than the man who worked twelve hours. Had the young person who worked twelve hours any time for education at all? He was compelled to devote twelve hours to work, and he required two hours a day for meals—where, then, could the time for education be found? What was the use of their grand scheme for the education of the people, if no time was afforded by which they could avail themselves of it? The hon. Member for Montrose had put an hypothetical case. "You cannot," said he, "pass an equal law for the limitation of labour, because the labourers are of different conditions in life. One has a father and mother, and another is not burdened with either." He (Mr. Bankes) said, give them all the advantage of the same law. He could see no distinction that could be safely made between the one labourer and the other. The House would remember that when this measure was first brought before them, they were shocked at the recital of the cruelties perpetrated in the factories; they had heard of the physical deformities which resulted from the nature of the employment. He had always heard and read those statements with much pain; with a belief that, intentionally, the manufacturers were not guilty of the cruelties imputed to them; and with the hope that the offences themselves were greatly exaggerated. He could not be indifferent either to the physical or to the moral deterioration of thousands of the industrious class. He was of opinion that this was the fitting opportunity for the enactment of a measure to remedy this evil. If they passed the Bill at this period, it would entail no inconvenience on the manufacturer, inasmuch as the hours of labour were limited on account of other circumstances. The hon. Member for Durham had been unable to carry into effect a measure which he himself declared was fit and proper, and therefore it behoved the Legislature to interpose a paternal care. He would give his cordial assent to the second reading of the Bill.

MR. M. PHILLIPS said, as the hon. Member for Durham had had a speech made at him, as the Member for Manchester *in posse*, by the hon. Gentleman who had just sat down, perhaps the House, before hearing that hon. Member, would permit him, as the Member for Manchester *in esse*, to express his opinions on the question, which opinions remained totally unchanged. He trusted it would not be thought he had no sympathy with the working classes of this country if he took a different view of the subject from the hon. Member for Dorsetshire. But it was the duty of the representatives of great commercial interests to weigh well the consequences before they allowed their feelings to precipitate them into any particular course of legislation. He should act now on this question as he had acted from the first moment it was mooted in the House. He had seen nothing that shook his opinion of the unsoundness of interference with adult labour; and though the Bill simply sought to regulate the labour of young persons, yet its effect would be to draw under its operation those who, in point of age, were not the parties for whom they were legislating. They must, then, raise the question which it practically became—that of limiting the adult labour of the people; and he would ask this question, *in limine*, why did they press a kind of legislation on one class of the community which they were not ready to apply to another? The question was of vast importance to the weal or woe of hundreds of thousands of fellow-beings; and he confessed he was not prepared to pass through the gate they were opening, being persuaded the results would be most disastrous to the commercial interests of the country. He could not separate the interests of the employers of capital from those of the operatives; they were inseparably connected. Capital could not be withdrawn from a branch of trade without injury to those it employed; they could not fetter capital without tying the hands of those it set in motion. He viewed it as a great, a vast question; he could not agree that it was merely a question of humanity. The right hon. Secretary of State had, without intending it, drawn a false conclusion from preceding facts. He said he did not apprehend the evils of interference would be so serious as represented by the manufacturers, because opinions equally strong as to the injury the cotton trade would suffer, were stated when limitations were first imposed. But this fact should be recollected; hitherto they had only legislated as to the classes of persons and the number of hours they should be employed. They had never yet touched the working of mills or machinery; they had not yet assigned any limit to the number of hours a factory might work. If a degree of success had attended their past legislation, they could not draw from it any conclusion that they should come safe out of the great experiment of limiting the hours of working machinery. This was the great distinction he wished to point out to the right hon. Baronet. With reference to the measure itself, he was confirmed in the opinion he had repeatedly stated, that if they limited the number of hours of labour to ten instead of twelve, there must be a corresponding diminution in the wages of the operatives employed. They should recollect that work in factories was not paid like agricultural labour, by the day; all good farmers now tried as much as possible to set task-work, leaving it to the man's skill to produce as much as he could in a given time. That was the principle on which wages were usually paid in cotton factories; and inasmuch as the masters gave so much for a certain number of pounds of cotton twist produced, that system would continue in spite of all the legislation that House could effect. If they limited the hours of working, they would interfere not merely with the labour of women and children, but with that of adults and grown-up men; and to that he was not prepared to give his consent. If they carried out this work of legislation, where could they stop? What trade was there to which they could not extend a similar system of interference? How, if they interfered in this respect, were they to avoid interference with the employment of agricultural labour? He would beg of hon. Members to weigh well the consequences before they decided on taking so important a step. He knew how presumptuous it would be supposed in any individual, in or out of the House, attempting to prophesy what the results might be; all he would say was, that he feared the consequences would be most serious to the national industry, and not in conformity with what was accepted as legitimate legislation. He did not ask for that kind of liberty in the question which was shown in their alternately talking about an eleven hours, a ten hours, or an eight hours Bill. He confessed, that if they were determined on making the experiment, he would prefer it being made in a manner about which there could be no mistake. He would much rather join hon. Members who proposed an eight hours Bill for all labour, rather than side with the party which suggested a middling, medium sort of legislation—which would go as far as the half-way house, and no further—and which set up no traceable test by which the merits of their suggestion might be tried. He could assure the House that he spoke on this question without any bias from personal interest. If such had been the case, he had endeavoured to divest himself of that bias; and he begged to state to hon. Members opposite, who might fancy, in looking at him as the representative of the millowners of Manchester, that he was deeply influenced by that fact in the view he might take of the subject, that, happily, he possessed no personal predilection which could have the slightest weight with him in the vote he should give. He looked at it simply as a great politico-economical question—he considered that a departure from the rules of political economy, as evinced in the attempt to legislate in reference to the time of labour, was tantamount to an attempt to regulate the wages of labour; and that if they ventured to touch them in one branch of industry, there was no earthly reason why they should not proceed to deal with them in all other branches. If they did make that attempt, most surely would they fail in the issue. He most sincerely regretted, when so much good and kindly feeling was being manifested towards the operative portion of the community, that they so erred in their efforts, that, with the intention of serving that class, they were taking a direction which could lead only to its injury. He admitted that he was addressing hon. Gentlemen whose purposes were most benevolent; but it was no offence to them to say they might, notwithstanding, be extremely ignorant of the practical details involved in the question which they urged upon the attention of the country. The House had, in fact, just heard a very frank admission from the right hon. Baronet the Secretary for the Home Department, whose industry in making himself master of every subject before him was well known, while he gave a very decided opinion, that in practical acquaintance with the state of our factory population he was altogether deficient. Now, when such vast interests and such great numbers were concerned in the settlement of this question, it was surely not expecting too much that hon. Gentlemen would examine before they resolved. It was not, however, for him to catechize hon. Members, or to ask them what they really did understand; the answer would be to tell him to mind his own business, and to give them that credit for intelligence which they perhaps accorded to him. He would simply express a doubt if they were justified in proceeding with such little hesitation before they were familiar with the facts. He could easily forgive, in the cases of some, the mistakes into which they had fallen. He was aware that, from the very commencement of the discussion, representations and statements had been made of a grossly exaggerated character with respect to the asserted unhealthiness of the employment in mills and factories. He hoped he should not be misunderstood in his sentiments relative to their past legislation; he granted it had been most useful and beneficial. In the cotton trade, as in every other trade, as in agriculture, there were many men possessed of so low an order of mind as to be regardless of the well-being of their fellow-creatures, and who neglected the interests of those connected with them in the relation of employer and employed. To such men their past legislation had applied, and to them only. The individuals, however, who had sought to avoid the rules and regulations of the cotton trade, were to be looked for merely in those districts to which supervision had not been extended; and, that supervision having become available, they were no longer to be found. For a considerable period the millowners and cotton-spinners had attempted to keep pace with legislation; but they had continually found themselves thwarted by the men he had described, and who had endeavoured to undersell them in every market. He did not deny the difficulties which had surrounded their past legislation; but he doubted whether the right hon. Baronet

(Sir G. Grey) had stated the case fully. They must recollect, in order to comprehend the result, that they had proceeded by degrees, beginning with children of very tender age; that, as they proceeded year by year, these children had progressed also, and therefore their regulations were now much better adapted to the existing state of things than at first. But while acceding to the supposition that when they dealt with the labour of women and children, they had done no mischief, he must protest, in contradiction to the views of the right hon. Baronet, that when they interfered with adult labour, they interfered with the investment of capital. He would not touch upon the question of foreign competition; but he apprehended, that if they sought to deny the free will of grown-up labour, they would ultimately have to regulate the rate of wages. These were the opinions he entertained; he saw nothing but difficulties accumulating prospectively connected with this question. He did not undervalue the well-being of his fellow-creatures; and he was as anxious as the hon. Gentleman who had last spoken to see them well educated: but he felt himself compelled to weigh well the permanent obstacles to the course recommended. He believed that if the Government adopted the advice of hon. Members opposite, they would permit a measure to pass disadvantageous to the multitude. He desired that some improvement might take place, but not to be carried out in the way suggested; and he hoped, ere long, to see some means taken to lessen those evils which were inseparable, not only from the employment in mills, but from labour in every large and crowded community, and which they might find in the lanes and alleys of great manufacturing towns, and meet with in the streets of that vast metropolis.

Lord J. MANNERS trusted that the hon. Gentleman, who had vindicated himself from any possible charge of being personally interested in the vote he should give, would permit him to say that there was no hon. Gentleman in that House standing in less need of such a vindication. Unnecessary, however, as he considered that protest to be, perhaps the hon. Gentleman would allow those who advocated this measure to make use of the same vindication. Until, indeed, he had heard the hon. Member for Montrose say that the Bill was supported on party grounds, he had little expected to have it declared in that House that there was the necessity, either in advocacy or in opposition, of such a superfluous attestation of integrity of motive. He should have thought that any one, looking back to the past history of the question, would come to the conclusion, however hon. Gentlemen might have differed in their views, that in this, at least, all were agreed; that never was a great question, affecting largely the polity of a country, debated more exclusively on pure, on high, and on disinterested grounds. And when he thought of the hundreds of thousands who in this half-century had gone down to their graves, their hopes deferred, deputing to their children the advocacy of the cause they had advocated—when he thought of those children who had been left to die of over-toil, and how, over and over again, they had petitioned and protested, it must be conceded that their conduct of this great cause had been worthy of this country, and worthy of the great interests involved in its satisfactory settlement. It was not alone the soldiers who had perished in this thirty years' pacific war; the generals who had led the armies had one by one departed. Sir R. Peel might die and bequeath the contest to Sir J. Hobhouse; Sir J. Hobhouse might advance to a certain point, and there rest contented with his labours. Mr. Sadler might succeed to Sir J. Hobhouse, and fight with no apparent success; and, afterwards, the head of the veteran Mr. Oastler might become grey with years of disappointment. Lord Ashley might carry on the war to the eve of victory; and then, overcome by extraneous circumstances, yield the leadership —at least, in that House—to the hon. Member for Oldham. But still, never for a moment did the working men despond or despair; still and always they had manifested the same resolute will and indomitable perseverance; and now, at the end of this Parliament, in the year 1847, they had the question definitively brought before them by the hon. Member for Oldham. He had listened with patience and attention to the speeches of hon. Gentlemen against the Bill; and more and more had he become convinced that Lord Ashley, when deprecating, in the noblest language, the unparalleled act of the Government in 1844, most truly ascribed to its real cause that influence which the noble Lord was allowed to possess:—

"It is possible," he said, "nay more, it is pro-

> bable (for their efforts have been great), that Her Majesty's Ministers will be successful—that they will carry the day; but, for how long? If they would render their victory a lasting one, they must extinguish all the sentiments that gave rise to mine."

In that sentence lay the secret of the indomitable will discovered, during so many years, by the working men and operatives of the north. As long as women had eyes to weep, and souls to pray—as long as men had hearts to feel, voices to utter, and hands to raise, so long would this struggle be continued; so long would those ill-gained victories be fruitless. And now, when the question was fully before them, let them consider what were the arguments which they had heard that day against the passing of the Bill. The right hon. Gentleman the Secretary of State for the Home Department had aptly described them as the old arguments; but then a certain amount of novelty was to be observed in their application. There was this material difference, that, year after year, as the same arguments were advanced, so was their efficiency impaired. That which was a good reason in 1844, lost all its logical spell in 1845; that which carried with it conviction, or at any rate votes, in 1845, had no weight whatever in 1847. The House would recollect some of the old arguments. Let them take, by way of instance, the corn laws. It would be remembered—and those whose memories went not so far back could refer to the records for the fact—that, in 1832, the argument borrowed from the existence of the corn laws was used in opposition to any alteration; and they could not forget the consummate skill with which that argument had been wielded against them in 1844, by the right hon. Baronet the Member for Dorchester (Sir J. Graham). Lord Ashley had felt that argument so strongly that he resigned his seat in that House, and contributed, by the influence of his high character, as much as any man could, to the repeal of the corn laws. But did not the men of the north of England feel, did not the working men of civilized society all over the world feel, that, when the League virtually triumphed last year, the Ten Hours Bill would follow as a necessary and plighted consequence? But, even then, the right hon. Baronet battled with pertinacity and courage worthy of a better cause; like that other valiant border knight, without fear and without reproach, so celebrated in ancient song, when he lost his legs he fought upon his stumps; and the right hon. Gentleman produced the remnant of the corn laws as an argument still against the adoption of the Ten Hours Bill. Well, what was the case now? Would they have anything said about the corn laws on the present occasion? There were no such corn laws now in existence; and by the time this Ten Hours Bill was proposed to come into operation, there would be no duty whatever left on foreign provisions of any sort. But why waste words on so transparent a fallacy? It had served its turn, and he hoped it had now been consigned to the tomb of all the Capulets. And if there had been any force in the argument as to the high prices of provisions, or if the corn laws made any valid objection to the passing of the Ten Hours Bill, because of the high prices of the food in use among our manufacturing population, was not that moment a favourable opportunity for adopting the Bill? Inasmuch, now, as high prices for provisions were paid in spite of there being no corn law, and when production in the manufacturing districts could not be said to be excessive, the Bill could have no apparent result; for it was admitted by every hon. Gentleman connected with those districts that the mills were obliged to work short time. The effect would be, however, that when the current set in the other way, and when a favourable reaction occurred, then stability and security would be imparted to that reaction, in the stead of that wild, insane, and injurious reaction which hitherto had attended the recurrence of prosperity to the manufacturing districts. In order to show that they could not depend, as it was contended they could, on the wisdom and prudence of the master manufacturers on such occasions, he would quote to the House an extract from the monthly circular of Messrs. Ferguson and Taylor for February. They had heard last month, of mills being closed, of mills working four days in the week; and now they saw a recurrence, without apparent cause, to full time. Was this an indication of the prudence becoming the circumstances? Messrs. Ferguson and Taylor said—

> "Stocks are daily accumulating, and must before long press heavily upon the market. Yet the spinners and manufacturers, with reckless infatuation, in the face of increasing stocks, of advanced prices in the raw material, and of a declining demand for yarns and goods, have for the greater part reverted to full time, and production within the last fortnight has resumed almost its former vigour."

Yes, it had resumed its former vigour, of course to be followed by a corresponding retrograde movement. And what could be the effect on the working man of such a system of never-ending variation? Could he who was not employed at all last week, and who was employed this week for a period of labour exceeding that decided by every medical writer as fit for a human being, and who would again be relegated to forced idleness next week—could that man be expected to acquire habits of sobriety and order, to be contented with his lot, and to regard with affection the institutions under which he lived? One of the main arguments to be urged in favour of this Ten Hours Bill—if they admitted, what was asserted always by hon. Gentlemen opposite, that a man could not do in ten hours the same work which he could do in twelve hours—one of its chief results would be found to be this: it would tend to spread over the surface of the year the very same amount of labour more evenly and more equally than at present. They were met by the assertion, in the second place, that even if the result were so, it would nevertheless be wrong to shackle capital and speculation; and that if they attempted to regulate the speed of manufacturing enterprise, they might destroy the springs by which it moved at all. Why, as well might they tell him, that—

> "when a horse
> Full of high feeding, madly had broke loose,
> And borne down all before him,"

was subjected to the curb, and made to know his rider, his usefulness would be impaired, and his energy destroyed. And to show practically that this was not the case, he would corroborate what had fallen from the right hon. Gentleman the Secretary of State, by referring to a table which appeared in the last edition of the great work of Mr. M'Culloch. The first great restriction upon the hours of factory labour was imposed in 1831. He (Lord J. Manners) found that, in 1831, the declared value of cotton exports was 17,182,736*l.*; in 1832, the amount was 17,344,676*l.* From that day to this, the value had gone on increasing; and in 1842, the last year mentioned by M'Culloch in that table, the amount was 21,670,127*l.* He thought this disposed of the argument that the markets of manufacturing enterprise had been narrowed by those restrictions. They had heard the prophecies contained in the circular of the committee of manufacturing millowners; but the statement of the factory delegates was deserving of attention, as showing how baseless were the fears expressed, that the Bill would lessen the rate of wages. The delegates said—

> "Night work has been entirely abolished. The hours of labour have been reduced from seventy-four to sixty-nine per week for all persons above the age of eighteen, except male adults. For all children below thirteen years of age, the hours have been reduced from seventy-four to thirty-six per week; and in every case the greatest benefits have resulted to the class of workers protected. On the question of wages, it was on every one of those occasions predicted that the price of labour would fall in proportion to the time reduced; whereas the contrary has in every instance been the result, and in several cases the money wages have been advanced."

Looking then to the past, and relying on the practical experience they had had for the future, they were justified in calling upon the opponents of the Bill to make out an irresistible case—to demonstrate by facts and figures, of which there could be no doubt, that wages would fall in consequence of the legislation which they supported. The manufacturing operatives said, in the first place, past experience had proved wages had not fallen, and, consequently, were not likely to fall; but, in the second place, granting this point—that wages would fall—they said that the counterbalancing advantage to them would be such as amply to compensate for that loss. Those who had read the speeches of Lord Ashley would not think it was necessary to fortify that position. Lord Ashley proved and showed, in an indisputable manner, that falling wages would practically be made up in the increased attention which the operative would be able to pay to domestic concerns, in the increased facilities for household economy, and, last and most important, in the improved social condition of the inmates of the cottages. But the factory operatives most justly said, in addition to all this, that, by the repeal of the corn laws, they had been taught to expect one great element in their expenses would have been reduced. He would confirm the statement of the factory operatives by an appeal to a very able and impartial work by a great free-trading authority—a work that ought to be read, he thought, by every Member of that House. Mr. Thornton, in his work on over-population, fully demonstrated that the operatives were not mistaken in supposing it to be for their interest that the hours of labour should be regulated. In discussing the bearing of Lord Ashley's proposal on the factory operatives, he said—

> "Although, as an isolated measure, the limitation of the hours of labour is of very doubtful expediency, a simultaneous arrangement might easily be made, which would free it from every objection. A fall of wages would be of no consequence, if the price of provisions and other necessaries fell at the same time, so as to enable the operative, notwithstanding the decrease of his earnings, to purchase as much as before of every article required. It has been shown that free trade would reduce prices one-third. Suppose, then, that wages should fall one-quarter, the operative would, notwithstanding, be really better off than before. Besides, it is possible that the unrestricted entry of foreign previsions might serve to prevent the occurrence of a fall of wages. . . . . . With this precaution (free trade), the adoption of Lord Ashley's plan, or even of one still bolder, would be an experiment of little hazard, which, if successful, would, by partially, at least, reinstating woman in her proper domestic office, contribute, more than any other single means, to the welfare of the labouring population of large towns."

Well, then, if this "school of Manchester," as it had been called by the hon. Member for Shrewsbury, was worthy of attention—if the reasons on which the corn laws were repealed were valid and sound reasons, viz., that the prices of provisions were to fall one-third, and our foreign trade was to be extended, then the factory operatives had a clear and undeniable right to demand the fulfilment of the promises made to them in this respect. But if, on the other hand, the Gentlemen representing the master manufacturers came forward and said they were grievously mistaken last year, but that they asked to be believed now; if they said, "We told you that provisions would fall, and they have not fallen; we told you that our foreign trade would be enormously increased, and it has not been increased; and, therefore, we ask you to believe that we are right, when we predict that a Ten Hours Bill will lower your wages,"—if they came forward with language like this, then he would say, that it was not because he undervalued the talents or the eloquence of those hon. Gentlemen, but because he was compelled by a plain and painful necessity that he said he could not, in future, place any confidence in them. But if this were felt to be a great and difficult question, and they were not willing to take upon themselves the responsibility of deciding it, then let them leave it to some impartial but competent men—to some intelligent, skilful, and honest arbitrators. Fortunately, these were to be found in the counties most interested—in Yorkshire and Lancashire; and, therefore, this question was not to be left to the decision of the manufacturers only. There were classes in those districts who could satisfactorily decide this great question; and he must say that when they found there a most laborious, and intelligent, and intellectual priesthood, and a dissenting ministry not less worthy of regard, for the care and pains they took to promote the interests of their flocks, and, above all, when they found a most intelligent body of medical gentlemen, they might safely leave the arbitration of this question to such impartial and skilful arbitrators. What was the view taken by the intelligent medical class? and could there be in that House a doubt as to the opinion of the clergy throughout Yorkshire and Lancashire, when such men as the dean of Manchester, the vicar of Huddersfield, the vicar of Leeds, the vicar of Bradford, and so many others, all came forward, and told the House that, for the sake of the spiritual welfare of their flocks, they sincerely prayed it to pass this Bill? When they found the medical gentlemen, and the traders, and the merchants, and the landed proprietors, all equally at one on the subject, could they doubt, for a moment, that they were justified in leaving to those intelligent and impartial classes to decide between the masters and the men on this question? The right hon. Gentleman the Secretary for the Home Department had given it as his opinion that the hon. Member for Oldham (Mr. Fielden) was not justified in drawing the conclusions which he had drawn from the statements of the Registrar General; but he would quote on the same subject the observations of a gentleman well known in the district to which he belonged—he meant Mr. Fletcher, the surgeon of Bury. In a letter dated February 7, 1847, that gentleman said—

> "I have been professionally so much engaged that I did not know till yesterday that the second reading of your Factory Bill is fixed for Wednesday next, or I would earlier have communicated a few statistical facts, which so strikingly illustrate the effects of the present system, especially as regards the unavoidable neglect of their infants by mothers employed in the mills, that you may perhaps consider them worth using on that occasion. They came to my knowledge during an inquiry into the sanatory condition of different parts of this town, for the purpose of giving evidence on an Improvement Bill. Some years before, while

preparing a report for the Health of Towns Commissioners, my attention had been attracted to the greater mortality especially of infants, in the factory districts of the town and neighbourhood, compared with those in which few mills existed. I, therefore, on this occasion, in calculating the average age at death in the better and worse conditioned localities, carefully distinguished the factory operatives from the other working classes. The result proved the average age attained by the factory workers and their infants to be somewhat less than one half of the other operatives in the same districts. In order to prevent any doubt as to the accuracy of these calculations, I may mention that on finding the age at death of the factory population in one district so low as eight years, which appeared really incredible, I went over the registers a second time, being assisted by a friend accustomed to such researches, when finding the extracts and calculations perfectly correct, an explanation of this remarkable result appeared in the fact, that of every 100 deaths a fraction over 61 are infants under the age of 2 years, while of the other operative classes, in the same locality, the deaths under 2 years are a fraction less than 33 in 100. I give below the average age at death, and the deaths under 2 years of factory and other operatives, in three districts, which, differing materially in their sanatory condition, and containing a large proportion of factory people, afford a fair comparison. The first is a town district, extremely ill-conditioned as regards ventilation, draining, and cleaning. In this locality, the average age at death of factory operatives is eight years, other operatives, 14 years; deaths of infants under 2 years, of factory operatives, 61 1-5th per cent; other operatives, 32 3-4ths per cent. In the registration district of Bury North, exclusive of the above, the average age at death is of factory operatives 9½ years; other operatives, 19 years; deaths of infants under 2 years, of factory operatives, 54 3-5ths per cent; other operatives 33 1-3rd per cent. In Woodhill district, lying a short distance from the town, and particularly well situated as regards the health of its population, the general mortality of the northern suburb, of which it forms a part, being 1 in 44 3-10ths, which is, I believe, about the average of all England, and being in this particular locality 1 in 40, the cottages of the operatives being also more roomy, better ventilated, and more cleanly than is generally the case, we find the average factory age 10 years; that of the other operatives 21½ years; the deaths of infants under two years, of factory parents, 56 per cent; other operatives, 33 per cent. In some other districts the disparity appears even greater, but the proportion of factory workers is so small, that I do not consider the test a fair one. I have only further to state, that these calculations are made on an average of seven years, and include every death that has occurred in these localities. They appear calculated to rebut the assumption, that it is the condition of large towns, and not the employment in factories, which produces the awful mortality, particularly of the infant population in the manufacturing districts. This, you are aware, has been strongly maintained by several medical practitioners and others. It was to disprove this fallacy that I endeavoured, as far as possible, in making these investigations, to ascertain the relative effect of the two sources of disease and premature mortality; and I am the more especially induced to forward you the above extracts from the tables I have constructed, as Sir George Grey appears to have adopted an opinion which I am convinced will prove to be founded on a hasty and superficial examination of this important question."

In corroboration of this view taken by Mr. Fletcher, he might state that in a supplementary report presented to that House by the Factory Commissioners in 1834, it was stated that in one year, in Manchester, out of 1,000 deaths, there died under two years of age 424 children; in Liverpool, out of 1,000 deaths, 362 children under two years of age; while in London, out of 1,000 deaths, there died 308 children under two years of age. These results too plainly showed how the homes of the poor factory workers were desolated by the long hours of labour. They showed to them the Saxon matron, like the Hebrew mother of old, weeping for her children, and refusing to be comforted, because "they are not." They showed them the cradle rifled of its fairest treasures; they showed them the funeral decked in white, to prove that the departed one had gone to join the army of the innocents. And, on this ground, he appealed to the House whether a case had not been made out for the passing of this Bill? Those extracts, he thought, proved not only that the passing of the Bill would not diminish trade or lessen wages, but that no schemes for the moral or social improvement of the operatives could be successful without that restriction of the hours of labour. He had heard it said in the free-trade-hall of Manchester that it was in vain to attempt to give education to the people—that it was in vain to establish lectures and institutions for the amusement and instruction of the people, if they did not at the same time provide them with the necessary hours to instruct themselves. And if this was true of milliners and shoemakers, of hatters and paper-stainers, was it less true of workers in the factories? No! but it was answered they were agreed as to the end; it was the means only by which they sought to attain it that were objected to. Now, he for one, if he could see that there was any rational hope of such arrangements being come to as were proposed by the hon. Member for Montrose; if he could hear of a general movement in the factory districts in favour of that mode of settling the question; if he could hear of thousands of master-manufacturers signing a bond to obtain this most desirable object; if he could hear of another quarter of a million being raised to insure the success of the scheme, then he would say there might be some solid foundation in fact for this argument. But when he heard of funds raised, not for such an object, not to promote such a measure, but to gratify the pride, perhaps the laudable pride, of the leaders of the master manufacturers, he should regard the working men of the north of England as the easiest dupes who had ever been practised upon if they should relax their exertions on any such groundless considerations. No! In a question of this kind, affecting the polity of the country, affecting the lives and the moral and social welfare of their fellow-subjects, the result was not to be left to the remote possibility of some unconceived, and as yet unexplained, regulations to be made between masters and men. They did not so deal with interests of far less importance. They did not wait till the rival companies who navigated the Thames agreed to regulate among themselves the speed of steam-boats; they did not wait till the master builders joined in a mutual bond that they would pay all due regard to the sanatory regulations necessary in constructing dwellings; they did not ask whether master chimney-sweepers would, of themselves, consent not to send climbing boys up their flues; they did not wait till the coal-masters agreed that they would put a stop to the practice of harnessing women to coal-trucks; they did not wait till the proprietors of the slaves in the West Indies made arrangements with those slaves to emancipate them—these, and thousands of other instances, could be adduced where they did not wait for private arrangements, but vindicated the imperial majesty of the law; that law to which Hooker said—"All things on earth do homage, the very least, as feeling her care—the very greatest, as not exempt from her power." No! they brought the majesty of the law to settle all those questions, and to vindicate the rights of the powers that were ordained of God, to watch over and protect the lives and happiness of the people. When hon. Gentleman objected on principle to legislative interference in this matter, they ought in consistency to object to interference in all other matters. Could the hon. Gentleman opposite, or the school of philosophy to which he belonged, say they disapproved of interference, after the fact that they had interfered and were interfering in a thousand instances? Could he persuade weakness to put itself at the mercy of power—poverty at the command of wealth? Could he persuade mankind that kings, and governments, and legislatures had been established in order to do nothing in these matters? And if this were not the case, if all the governments of all parts of the world, and in every period of the world's history, had interfered to protect and watch over the weakest and poorest of their subjects, then let them point out to him, if they could, a more feasible, a more safe, and less objectionable mode of interposition, and give a more noble and glorious reason for interference than that which was now presented. It was not by the mere assertion of some abstract principle that had not yet been carried out, and which, if carried out at this moment in the sister kingdom, would consign millions of their fellow-beings to certain and inevitable deaths—it was not upon such grounds that they could refuse to pass this Ten Hours Bill. He almost owed an apology to the House for having said one word on this part of the argument, after the able speech last Session of the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Edinburgh—a city which he rejoiced to think was, with its acute and intelligent population, and its active and energetic Kirk, entirely with them on this question; while last, but not least, its "buff and its blue" was also on their side; for he had read in the last number of that philosophical organ an adhesion to the cause for which he was contending. The remarks of the *Edinburgh Review* were so pointed and germane to the matter, that he could not part with this portion of the subject without reading them to the House. It said—

> "Once admit the principle that Government may rightly exercise such influence—and the usage of every day sanctions it—and every case seeming to call for it is to be argued on its own merits. And so it must be with reference to the limitation of the hours of labour, the most knotty question of this class now before the public. Its supporters urge that the duration of labour which men will engage to undergo, is too much for their bodily and mental health. They say that even high wages, thus acquired, bring little of blessing with them to men spiritless from over-exertion—in homes rendered squalid and uncomfortable, because there is neither time nor inclination left for the exercise of household economy. They say that hasty marriages, early deaths, constant improvidence, brutish and irrational habits of living, are the necessary concomitants of a state of things in which the whole six days are devoted to toil. They even affirm that man deteriorates with these evil influences, not only in his higher qualities, but also in his inferior capacity as a machine of production, and that, with shorter labour, he might do more or better work. The time is surely past for answering these arguments by mere assertion of ge-

neral doctrine. Fair reasons must be given for supposing that the point has been already reached—some point there evidently must be—at which further interference would do more harm, by diminishing the productiveness of the fund for the maintenance of labour, than it could do good by its influence on the character of the labourer. And since every step which the Legislature has hitherto taken in the same direction has been met with similar objections and denunciations, none of which have yet been realized, the burden of proof seems to lie rather on the opponents than supporters of further reform."

He asked the House whether such proof had been furnished or not? He ventured, at the outset of his remarks, to characterize the arguments of the Members for Montrose and Manchester as the old and often-refuted arguments. One observation formed the main burden of their song, and it was, that the foreign trade of the country would suffer if this restriction on the hours of labour were granted. The hon. Member for Montrose said—Look at Prussia and America, and at the long hours of labour in those countries. Now, he must direct the attention of the House to the fact that, since 1839, no person under the age of 16 was allowed in Prussia to work more than ten hours a day; and that, practically, throughout Prussia the hours of work for all were eleven hours. He would also direct their attention to the fact, that the commissioners who had been quoted by the hon. Member for Montrose, and who had reported on the state of Lowell, in America, lamented the stern necessity which made them maintain the system of long hours. What were the reasons urged by the commissioners? Why, that they (the Americans) were exposed to competition with another country. What country? Why, this country; and so, in addition to the injustice we inflicted upon the working men of our own country, we compelled the Americans, against their will and desire, to work their manufacturing population beyond what they thought fair and just to them. He thought that every impartial mind was convinced that our foreign trade had not suffered by the past reduction of the hours of labour, and no case had been made out to show that it would suffer; and if so, surely the time had arrived when, for the sake not only of the working men and working women in the north of England, but of the master manufacturers themselves, this great question, which had been at issue for so many years, should be finally set at rest. He asked the present House of Commons, was it prepared to defer it, and leave to another Parliament the settlement of the question, for the reasons which had been urged to-night by the few who had spoken against it? Was the House of Commons, which represented the working men of the north of England, as well as the master manufacturers, prepared to reject such a measure as this?—a measure which had for so many years enlisted the feelings, the sympathies, and the support of the working men and working women of the north of England; which had in its favour the opinions of the clergy, of the dissenting ministry, of the medical men, of all the impartial classes in that part of the country; a measure which was based upon the experience of the past, the favourable results of which were a pledge of future beneficial effects. Would the House of Commons reject such a measure, because some hon. Gentlemen (and their number was not very great in that House) were pleased to assert that it did not altogether square with their notions of economical science? Should it do so, and should the House most unfortunately come to a conclusion adverse to the second reading of this Bill, they, at least, on that (the Opposition) side of the House, would retire from the contest undismayed and undeterred by so great a defeat, and without despairing of future success. They would retire encouraged and cheered by the reflection that, as all former defeats and disappointments had but stimulated the exertions of their toiling clients, so this would but lead to fresh endeavours, and animated by the gratifying conviction that they, the Tory Gentlemen of England, had maintained their just and historical position; that, consistently with the character they had ever aspired to, they had fought the fight of the poor against the rich, and had been fellow-soldiers with the weak and defenceless against the mighty and the strong, and to the best of their ability, had wielded the power which the Constitution reposed in them, to protect and defend the working people of this country. He trusted, however, that the Bill would pass into a law, and that this protracted struggle would be determined—protracted, indeed, but not necessarily ceaseless: to be terminated, if they so pleased, that very day, and terminated amidst the acclamations of millions, and the blessings and prayers of a toiling and a patient people.

The CHANCELLOR OF THE EXCHEQUER was very sorry that the noble Lord who had just sat down had introduced into the course of his speech a tone which he had carefully abstained from previously, and which he had in fact deprecated in the earlier part of his observations. He was very sorry that the noble Lord had made any allusion to party questions in the discussion. He had hoped that it would have been discussed apart from all party feeling, and that it would be decided on the reason of the case. When, however, the noble Lord claimed for the Tory party in that House the character of exclusive protectors of the interests of the poor, the noble Lord should also bear in mind that those hon. Gentlemen who disagreed with him had the merit of having passed a measure which gave to the mass of the people the main article of subsistence at the cheapest possible rate, to which measure the noble Lord and that party who acted with him had given their most strenuous opposition. He did not wish to pursue the subject further, or to say much upon the present question, which had been so repeatedly before the House. He believed that all parties in that House were actuated in respect to this measure by a sincere desire to befriend the poor. The noble Lord had said that the arguments against the Bill before the House had no novelty—that they had been often repeated, and inferred their inefficiency from those facts; but he very much doubted if, old as they were, and wanting novelty as they did, the reply of the noble Lord had refuted them. Nothing new, he was well aware, could be said upon the subject; and he should not have now trespassed upon the time of the House but for the changed aspect in which it came before them, as regarded the course taken by the Government, in consequence of the political changes which had occurred since it was last under discussion. On the last occasion that the Bill was before the House, it was opposed by the late Government. Since then a change had taken place in the Ministry; and some of his noble and right hon. Friends near him felt it to be their duty to give their support to the question, as they had given it before that change had taken place. But he himself, maintaining, as he did, the self-same opinion which upon former occasions he had expressed, felt it necessary to explain very shortly the grounds upon which he did so, lest the opinion which his right hon. Friend (Sir G. Grey) had expressed should be supposed to go forward to the public with the weight of Government authority attached to it. Every individual Member of the Government would follow on the present occasion the course which he thought right; and he felt bound to take care that the opinion he maintained should not be prejudiced by the supposition that it was opposed by the authority of the Government. The noble Lord opposite had assumed the character of protector to the working classes, because he supported the question before the House; but he believed that he was their best friend when he opposed it. He was as much a friend to the poor man as any Gentleman in that House; and if he were disposed to overlook the other immense interests which were involved, and to consult those only of the working man, he could not give his consent to such a measure, as he believed it would be most injurious in its results to them. In fact he considered that he could not do the working man a greater injury than by acceding to that measure. The question at issue was, whether the working man could be benefited or injured by diminishing the amount of his labour. The advantages of what had been already done in respect to children, he had not the slightest intention to dispute; neither did he mean for a moment to deny that children and young persons were entitled to the protection of the Legislature, as regarded the amount of labour required from them. The object of the Bill before them, however, was the limitation of adult labour, not of young persons and women only, but of all factory labour. To the credit of the delegates from the manufacturing districts, they had all fairly and openly acknowledged that such was the object. It would therefore be but time wasted to discuss it on any other footing than on that of a Bill for limiting all labour in factories to ten hours a day. In spite of all the eloquence of the noble Lord on the other side of the House, he should call upon hon. Members to consider, before they came to any conclusion upon the subject, what would be the effect of the measure upon the wages of the working man. It might, no doubt, be a benefit to the poor operative to have his parks, and his Athenæums, and his lectures, when he could find leisure to enjoy them; but he maintained that it would be a far greater benefit to him that he should not be deprived of one-fifth or one-sixth of his means of subsistence—of the means of purchasing the necessaries of life for himself and his family. However glad he should be to see the labourer, therefore, in possession of the time for recreation, and the inclination for it, too, he considered it was a matter of much greater importance to his welfare that his means of subsistence should not be curtailed. That argument had not been fairly met by any hon. Gentleman on the other side of the House in dealing with the bearings of the whole question. By diminishing the hours for labour, the House would increase the cost of production, and that cost would either fall upon the profits of the manufacturer, or the wages of the artisan. If the same quantity of goods were to be produced, the fixed capital necessary for its production must be increased. This would cause either the price of the article to be increased to defray the increased cost of production, which would diminish the consumption; or in order to maintain the same consumption, the cost of production must be diminished in some way or other. This diminution must fall either on the profits of the master manufacturer, or on the wages of the workman, or be divided between both. If that was the fact—and the arguments of the noble Lord did not gainsay it—who could say, bearing in mind how large a portion of the trade of this country was a foreign trade, that the price of our manufactured goods could be raised? If not, then the cost of production must be lessened: if that occurred, profits, or wages, would have to bear the loss, or they must share it between them. Firstly, then, could profits be reduced? It was true that large fortunes had been made in the cotton trade by some individuals; but it was equally true that many had been ruined in it. And when the House looked at the speculation which existed in building mills, and the amount of capital engaged in it, he was satisfied that they would come to the conclusion that the average profits of that trade did not exceed the average profits of any other trade, or that which was required in fact to carry it on. If profits were of this description, they could not be reduced without a risk of destroying the manufacture; and if they were not reduced, but the reduction fell upon wages, there would be a perpetual struggle carried on between master and operative. As to the rate of wages, he (the Chancellor of the Exchequer) asked the House, however, whether in the end master or man was most likely to succumb—the master, who had the power of transferring his capital to foreign countries, or the workman, who was, comparatively speaking, tied to the soil? Which of these two classes would be most likely to shift the burden off its own shoulders upon those of the other, the House would easily guess. He believed that a reduction of the hours of labour, therefore, would cause a reduction of the wages of labour—wages which, in bad times, or seasons of scarcity and general local distress, were insufficient to support the workman, and which at the best were not more than enough to find him the necessaries of life, and a very few inexpensive comforts. That being the case, he maintained that the Bill before the House, if adopted by the Legislature, would inflict a far greater injury upon the working man, than any advantage which the noble Lord had shadowed forth. The noble Lord had spoken of the principle of interference, and argued in favour of its unlimited extension, on the ground that it had, in some few instances, been adopted by the Legislature. But why, he asked the noble Lord, was factory labour singled out as the sole object of legislative interference? If the principle was right as regarded factory labour, it was right as regarded every other kind of labour. The reports which had been made to Parliament from time to time showed that there were a number of other trades in which greater injury was inflicted upon human life than in factories. Indeed it could be shown that in towns where various trades were carried on, those operatives employed in factories were the least affected by mortality. And as far as his (the Chancellor of the Exchequer's) experience went, he had no reason to believe that factory workpeople, or children in factories even, were subjected—at least in the West Riding of Yorkshire, the place with which he was best acquainted—to any degree of labour which injured life, or which was even detrimental to health. Many Gentlemen on that side of the House had strongly deprecated any limitation of the hours of labour for adults; and he entirely agreed in opinion with those who were prepared to resist any interference with that class. He saw nothing in the circumstances of the case to call for such limitation of labour. His own conviction was, that workmen had in their hands the power of shortening the hours of labour, if they chose to exercise it, without the need of appealing to the Legislature; and his conviction likewise was, that they pressed forward the Bill before the House, because they believed that if the hours of labour were shortened by legislative enactment, they would still receive their present wages. Those hon. Gentlemen who imagined that the same wages would be paid for ten as for twelve hours' work, were consistent in pressing on the measure; but those who believed that wages would be correspondingly reduced, would not be consistent if they supported it, because it would be to force lower wages upon the workman. But he (the Chancellor of the Exchequer) did not believe that the workmen, as a body, wanted the Bill under these circumstances; and he would refer to what passed in the borough which he had the honour to represent, in proof of his conviction on the subject. No one was more anxious that the hours of labour should be shortened, if it could be done consistently with the mutual interests of the masters and men, than he was; and he had, accordingly, suggested to some of the manufacturers in Halifax, to endeavour to effect an arrangement with their men upon this subject. But he found that neither party were, in their consciences, convinced upon the point. At the close of the last Session of Parliament, he had spoken to one or two master manufacturers of that borough, suggesting to them to try working with short time, and a corresponding reduction of wages. An offer was accordingly made by one of the largest millowners in Halifax, and by others also in the vicinity, in the shape of a declaration, that they would work short time, unless the majority of their hands wished they should not. The first statement he (the Chancellor of the Exchequer) should make, was the result of the experiment made by Mr. Ackroyd, than whom, many hon. Gentlemen on the other side of the House would bear witness, there was not a more respectable nor honourable man in existence, and of whom, he (the Chancellor of the Exchequer) would say, there could be no one more anxious to try the experiment fairly and fully in every particular. A placard was accordingly posted in his four mills, that from a given day he would work short time, unless he was distinctly requested by his hands to the contrary. In the first mill, all the hands signed for a preference of the 12 hours and undiminished wages: in the second mill, 165 signed for the long hours, and 75 against them: in the third mill, 59 only signed for the long hours; on which Messrs. Acroyd announced their intention to commence on the first day of the following October to work short time in that mill. Before the day arrived, however, the workmen sent a deputation to induce the firm to continue to work long time. In the fourth mill, which was a weaving shed, the parties worked by the piece. They did not sign the request to work long time, and consequently in that shed the hours were reduced from 11½ to 11 hours. Here, then, the parties working by the piece were masters of their own time; but these very parties who had had their time reduced to 11 hours, were so anxious to continue working their usual time, that they had since given up half an hour which was allowed them for meal time: they had given up that time, and were now working the same length of time as before, only in a smaller compass. This experiment, then, had been fairly and fully—indeed, he could answer that it was fairly—tried, and that the resolutions come to by the workmen were their own act and deed, and that they preferred the long hours. He, therefore, must believe it as indisputable, that if the workmen were anxious for short hours, it was from the full belief that with short hours they would continue to receive the same amount of wages they now received from the long time. In five other mills at Halifax, the majority had also signed for long hours. In the first of these mills all signed for long time; in the second a majority of 50 signed for long time; in the third a majority of 40 signed for long time; in the fourth 103 were for, and only 8 against, long time; and, in the fifth mill, 276 were for, and 126 against, long time. Now, he did not think even in these cases that there was the slightest reason why the parties should have had long hours, if it had not been requested by themselves that they should have them; and he must therefore look to this as a strong proof that the long hours were preferred by the workmen. What had been said by hon. Gentlemen opposite, he gave them credit for fully believing, and he could not quarrel with them for acting on that belief; but this he did say, and that which he believed, that a reduction of wages would be the inevitable result of a reduction of time. It by no means followed that they should accede to the request of the workmen, merely because they had made a request, for he believed they had made that request under a total mistake of what should be given to them. He was so little able to address the House, that he would not go further into the subject. Putting, however, aside for a moment the interest of the artisan employed in mills, he begged to say that the question equally affected a large number of persons who were dependent on various occupations connected with the trade of factories: all who were dependent on the production of the raw material and the preparation of the material; all who were employed in the subsequent preparation of the goods, the finishing, packing, carrying, shipping, and exporting the manufactured articles; these and others were equally concerned in the question of shortening the hours of labour. If the hours of labour were shortened—if the consumption of the material was diminished, and the manufactured production also diminished—they not only affected the interest of the factory operative, but they affected also the interest of large bodies of men on either side of him, who had no opportunity of expressing their opinion on the subject. These were important considerations, and ought by no means to be left out of view when arguing the question, though he was unable to go into them at length on the present occasion. Taking the subject, however, on its narrowest ground, the interest of the working man—taking it on the ground on which the noble Lord had placed it, and saying that he was as willing to meet the noble Lord, as to do what was beneficial to the working man; he was bound to declare that, differing from the noble Lord's views as to what was likely to prove beneficial, he must as conscientiously give his opposition to the measure, as the noble Lord had conscientiously given his support to it.

The MARQUESS of GRANBY was quite ready to admit that in deciding upon a question of such vast importance as the present, they should take care not to be led astray by false notions of philanthropy on the one hand, but he was equally convinced on the other hand that they should take care that they did not fetter their judgment by the cold theories of political economy. He was quite ready to admit that they should bring every useful argument to bear upon this subject; but he must say that the patient endurance, the earnest but at the same time the conciliatory and kind language that had been used by the factory operatives towards their employers, must give them all a desire to grant their wishes, and induce them to believe that what they demanded was founded upon justice, and justice alone. He did not intend to found any argument upon the repeal of the corn laws, because he had always been of opinion that the maintenance of those laws was conducive to the interests of this country; but he might go thus far—he might be allowed to remind those hon. Gentlemen, who thought that the maintenance of the corn laws was unjust, that they had made a kind of compact with the factory operatives that if they succeeded in procuring the abolition of those laws, they would be prepared to support a Bill for shortening the hours of labour in factories. He thought that both practice and theory were in favour of the shortening the hours of labour. He did not mean to say that the effect of the legislation that had been already made on this subject, was a proof of the desirableness of their proceeding still further in shortening the hours of labour; but he did say that the feelings of humanity and common sense demanded a reduction in the hours of labour. The right hon. Gentleman the Chancellor of the Exchequer had said that the wages of the operative must be reduced if this Bill were passed. He was quite ready to admit that when they reduced the number of hours that the operative had to work, the master manufacturer might find it necessary to make up for that deficiency of labour by employing more hands. But he thought likewise that if they did employ more hands, the number of workpeople remaining the same, as an inevitable consequence from the principle of competition amongst manufacturers, the wages of labour must be raised. On those grounds he was, therefore, of opinion that they would confer a great boon upon the operatives in the manufacturing districts by shortening the hours of labour, as this Bill would not materially, if at all, reduce their wages. He had no doubt that if the wages were not reduced, they could not by any other means raise the same quantity of manufacture and of produce as they did at present. He thought that women who now were labouring in factories would produce more in proportion if they worked only ten hours. He thought that the reduction in the produce of labour would not be equal to the reduction in the hours of work. There was another argument also that had been brought forward by his noble Friend, which was to the effect that if they passed this measure, it would not diminish the amount of labour, but spread it more equally over the surface —that they would not have the overproduction and overworking at one time, and a deficiency of employment and stagnation in trade at another. The right hon. Gentleman the Chancellor of the Exchequer had stated that the factory operatives preferred the present hours of labour and wages to a reduction of the hours if accompanied by a corresponding reduction in their wages; but he believed that at all the meetings of operatives which had been lately held on this subject, they had unanimously said that they were willing to have short time and their wages reduced, in preference to their present long hours. Under these circumstances, believing, as he did, that they would confer a great and indisputable good upon the factory operatives, and believing, at the same time, that by conferring that boon upon the operatives they would not materially injure the condition of the employers of labour, he should give his most cordial support to the second reading of this Bill.

Dr. BOWRING felt himself called upon by a paramount sense of duty to oppose the further progress of this Bill. He did not doubt—indeed, he readily acknowledged—that philanthropy to which the noble Lord had given expression in such eloquent terms; but he thought that the noble Lord would confess that, in judging as to what true philanthropy was, they should weigh well the consequences of the evil that would result from the good proposed. The noble Lord would no doubt admit that that legislation which was likely to diminish the well-being of the community in general, and especially of the labouring community, ought not to be adopted by that House. Now, the only way that they could judge of the consequences of legislation, was to gather together such facts as were accessible—to divest themselves of their passions and prejudices—and to inquire fully as to what would be the consequences of their legislation. It appeared to him that the demand for this Bill was grounded on two fallacious suppositions: the first was, that ten hours' labour or less would have the effect of equalizing the distribution of labour; and that if they should decide ten hours to be the maximum of labour, they could also decide that those ten hours should be paid for, equal to twelve hours in favour of the working community. Now, he believed the law of supply and demand to be inexorable, and not subject to the control of Parliament. No legislation whatever could provide regular employment for the working people; and he contended that the necessary effect of legisation on this subject, would be the most disastrous consequences to the labourer, who could only be employed six or eight hours a day, as in the present state of trade. This Bill would act as a most intolerable despot to the working man who might be desirous of raising his condition by working beyond the ordinary hours of labour. The direct effect of this legislation would be a reduction in the price of labour. The right hon. Gentleman the Secretary of State for the Home Department said, "I wont for a moment countenance the delusion that two hours can be taken from the daily labour of the operative classes without their making a great pecuniary sacrifice;" but the noble Lord, and many other Members of that House, who supported this Bill, as well as others of high authority who advocated the measure out of doors, had told the working classes that they need be under no apprehensions that the quantity of goods manufactured would be lessened—that the rate of wages would not be lower—and, in fact, that if they were to have only ten hours' labour, their condition would not be deteriorated. That statement had gone over the width and breadth of the land; and it was through that delusion, he would venture to say, that the working classes had to a great extent been induced to take the part which they had in the agitation for this Bill. In the borough which he represented, he had heard from one of the principal manufacturers that he had offered to employ his workpeople but eleven hours per day. He said, "Come to me on Monday morning; I am willing to make the experiment in my mill, but do not be under any delusion; if in the eleven hours you cannot produce the same quantity of work that you produce in twelve, it is impossible that I can give you the same rate of wages." Now, the hon. Member who had introduced this Bill, would probably be much inclined to doubt whether a reduction of two hours per day from labour, would greatly diminish the amount of production. He understood that a very large body of the most influential, the most intelligent, and opulent manufacturers had tested the consequences of this Bill, should it become a law; and they unanimously came to this conclusion, that it would cause a reduction in the value of the produce in the mills of cotton only—he would say nothing of silk—of 12½ per cent. Now at this moment he believed that the value of the cotton manufacture in this country exceeded 30,000,000*l.*; the number of bales sold for working up, amounted, he understood, to about a 1,500,000*l.*, and that 1,500,000*l.* represented from 12,000,000*l.* to 15,000,000*l.* before it left the hands of the English manufacturer. He believed it could not be doubted that the cost of production per annum ranged from 1,800,000*l.* to 2,000,000*l.* He believed that there were only three parties principally concerned in that production. The House must remember that as regarded those parties, they had a right to buy in the cheapest and sell in the dearest market. The Legislature had adopted the principles of free trade, and the people had a right to require that they should give effect to those principles. It appeared on unquestionable authority, that the effect of the limitation in the hours of labour proposed by this measure, would produce an annual loss of from 1,800,000*l.* to 2,000,000*l.* Now, he would inquire on whom this loss would fall? It appeared to him that it could only be borne by one of three parties. The first was the consumer, and perhaps it might be more generally distributed in this way at the least amount of individual sacrifice; but the question was, would the consumers pay this loss—would they rest contented with the extra price which would be charged them? But then they might say, "The manufacturers are gorged with enormous profits, the manufacturers must pay it; they are opulent and successful men, and we will wrest from them a portion of their ill-gotten gains." But was it the fact the gains of the master manufacturers were so large as to induce them to continue manufacturing, when they by their legislation exacted from them an amount of 2,000,000*l.* sterling annually? Their legislation would inevitably drive away capital from the manufacturing interest, and every farthing that they drove away must be paid by the operative. What were the statements of a late hon. Member of that House, who was one of the most intelligent men, and whose manufactory was amongst the best conducted—he meant Mr. Gregg? That gentleman's statement was founded on long, intelligent, and thoughtful experience, and it was to the effect that, notwithstanding he had been in the cotton manufacture during the last ten years, and had availed himself of all the improvements in machinery, on a capital of 150,000*l.* he had realized only two and a half per cent. Did they think then that the cotton manufacture afforded such profits as to enable them to enter upon these daring experiments? To him it appeared not. Well, then, if the consumer was not to pay the loss of 2,000,000*l.*, to which he had alluded, it must fall upon the operatives, and the effect of this legislation would be to take from that class the means of knowledge to that extent. Was it wonderful, then, that the right hon. Baronet the Secretary of State for the Home Department had spoken with so much hesitation in giving his qualified adhesion to the propositions of the hon. Member for Oldham? Many hon. Members had made reference to what they called "an understanding" between the manufacturers and the operatives, that if the corn laws were repealed, the Members who advocated their abolition, would be prepared to assist the operatives in obtaining the passing of this Bill. A statement had been made at a meeting in the borough which he had the honour to represent, by a noble Lord whose name was especially connected with this movement, to the effect that a compact had been entered into between the free-traders and the factory operatives for a Ten Hours Bill. He (Dr. Bowring) would venture to ask when, and where, and by whom, that compact was made? He confessed he could not understand the doubt, hesitation, and resistance in respect of this movement which were to be found amongst the labouring population on this point. Few of them had come forward. Amongst the most intelligent of them, the free-trade principles had, no doubt, made a gradual progress. And what had been the mission of that House for many years past? To impose fetters upon labour and capital? To add difficulties to the struggle in which both were engaged? No; their mission had been higher and nobler; they had been engaged in the work of emancipation; they had been endeavouring to strike off the fetters under which both were struggling; and this attempt, which the noble Lord (Lord John Manners) said was in accordance with the ancient history of Toryism, was an effort to introduce some of those baneful principles of protection which had heretofore existed, and to give them greater effect and efficiency than they possessed before. He believed that the working classes were, in the phraseology of the Secretary of State for the Home Department, under a delusion as to the consequences of this legislation, which would undoubtedly sweep away a sixth of the labour in the cotton districts of this country. Unfortunately, it was too true that the wages which the people employed in that manufacture were at present enabled to earn, were insufficient for the comfortable maintenance of a man and his wife and children; and if the House passed this measure, they would, in effect, say to such a man—“ Notwithstanding your difficulties, and your desire to work for the maintenance of yourself and family, one-sixth must be taken from the amount of your wages.” For himself, he might say, that he had at all times humbly endeavoured to advocate the claims of the working classes; he wished that they had more power, for he believed that they would use it wisely. He had always struggled to give them the means of exercising a more direct influence than they had exercised in that House, because he had great reliance upon their intelligence and good sense, and because he was certain that their interests could not be dissociated from those of the community at large; and it was especially on the ground that he believed that the interests of the working classes in this case were at stake, and would be seriously deteriorated and damaged, and because he believed that if the House passed this measure, they would be acting towards them in a philanthropic spirit certainly, but it would prove to be a legislation of the most baneful character. Believing, then, that the operatives, the manufacturers, and our commercial relations generally, would be most seriously damaged by this Bill, he should offer to it the strongest opposition.

Mr. P. HOWARD said, that when he last addressed the House on this subject, it had been his wish, and the wish of many persons who were interested in this question, that there should have been some general agreement among the master manufacturers with respect to the hours of working, and that legislation should have been avoided. That agreement, he was afraid, was now out of the question. But this fact, at any rate, appeared, that although the majority of the master manufacturers might be opposed to a reduction of the hours of labour in the case of persons under eighteen years of age, yet there was a respectable minority in favour of the proposition. Taking into consideration the opinions of that minority and of the working classes, he had come to the conclusion to give the Bill his hearty support. The landlords had last year been sacrificing their monopoly; he appealed to the manufacturers to make, in their turn, some little sacrifice, and lay on the altar of their country some little tribute.

Mr. MUNTZ rose amidst loud calls for a division, and said, it was well known that ever since he had had the honour of holding a seat in Parliament, he had invariably given his support to this Bill; and he rose on this occasion to say, that having heard many extraordinary statements respecting masters and workmen, when this Bill was last before the House, he had taken an opportunity, a few weeks ago, of going to Manchester, and seeing with his own eyes, and hearing with his own ears—having a greater respect and confidence in them than in those of anybody else—what was the real state of things in the cotton factories there; and he was bound to say that all the changes which he found to have taken place in Manchester in the production of goods since he had last visited a factory, twenty years ago, seemed to him to operate to the disadvantage of the operatives. One alteration was, that the speed of the machinery was doubled, and in many instances trebled. Then the number of spindles which each girl had to mind was double, and, in many instances, treble, what it used to be; and the quantity of work done was three times more than previously, although the labour of the parties might be something less on the whole. But, as a practical man, he could say, that the more spindles these females had given them to mind, and the quicker they revolved, the more trouble was given them. The House must remember that it was with women and children that this Bill was to deal; it was their case the House was considering; and he wanted to know how far such labour was fit for such persons. It was said that it was not hard labour. Granted that it was not hard. Still, was there an hon. Gentleman in the House, who, if he had to travel over the slippery floor of a room, the atmosphere of which was heated to the extent of from 70 degrees to 90 degrees, for twelve hours, would not think it very tiresome? Whoever looked at these poor girls, and marked their pale, unhealthy, emaciated appearance, could not help feeling that it was a disgrace to their employers and to the place they lived in, that they should be reduced by their daily labour to such a state; and he said the Legislature was bound to see that those young persons had an amount of work given them, suitable to their age and condition, and the atmosphere they had to do it in. If hon. Members were shut up all day long in a room with an atmosphere at 80 or 90 degrees, they would soon become emaciated, even without any work to do. This occupation, and the mode of it, were the reason why you never saw the face of a healthy-looking operative girl in Manchester; and that it was the fact he could state, for he had observed it himself only a few weeks ago. [Mr. Bright: Hear, hear.] Why, did the hon. Member think that nobody but a cotton manufacturer could be a judge of the condition of a factory girl? How was it that the hon. Member (Mr. Bright) had been the advocate of a Ten Hours Bill, and in the year 1833 had even got up and paid the expenses of a petition in favour of the measure? Why should the hon. Member then be an advocate for ten hours, and now insist that if the House made this change, they would destroy the interests of the cotton trade, and not only that, but the interests of these poor people? But the hon. Member let the cat out of the bag, for he said that the manufacturers would only want a little more capital to be able to do the same quantity of work in the diminished time; and therefore the question before the House really was, whether the master should gain a trifling per centage more or less profit, by the destruction of the brains, flesh, and bones of these poor women and children? The learned Doctor below him (Dr. Bowring) had said that the Bill would take off one-sixth from the wages of the labourer. But he would ask how many hours in a series of ten years were worked on an average per day throughout that time? He believed that no master manufacturer in the country had worked ten hours a day, on the average of the last ten years. It was true there were manufacturers who sometimes worked twelve or thirteen hours a day for a while, and then were forced to consign the goods so produced to China, or some foreign country, at a great loss, there being no demand in this country for the overplus thus produced. In fact, he had always thought that the worst opponents of the manufacturers were themselves; for he had repeatedly noticed that although the foreign competition was the first cause of reduction in price, such reductions were almost invariably continued far below the original foreign prices. He said, then, that in a series of years as it was the manufacturers did not work their mills ten hours a day; and that the operatives, therefore, could lose nothing in wages in consequence of the passing of this Bill; nor would either they or the masters lose anything in advantages of any kind, for the same quantity would be produced as at present, when the average was not ten hours a day in a series of years. Still it was said that, if this reduction of the time of labour took place, there would be a reduction of wages in proportion. Had that taken place in other cases in which the Legislature had interfered? Did not the Legislature interfere and introduce limitations and restrictions of various kinds into other occupations? Did they not limit the number of people who rode in an omnibus? Did they not limit the price of the charge for a cab? They did not allow the best horse, or the lowest offer to have a preference of fares. In hundreds of other things they interfered in the same or some similar way, and no reduction in wages took place. If there were to be no interference in this case, on the ground that they would not interfere with labour, why, they must allow every man to grow his own tobacco. He contended that the Legislature had interfered in very many instances of manufactures with great advantage not only to the labourer, but to the master manufacturer. With respect to the question of wages, he understood that in the mill of the hon. Member (Mr. Bright) at Rochdale, cardloom hands were paid in 1820, 8*s.* a week; in 1833, 8*s.*; in 1844, 8*s.* 6*d.*; in 1846, 9*s.* 6*d.* Throstle-spinners were paid in 1820, 8*s.* a week; in 1833, 8*s.*; in 1844, 8*s.* 6*d.*; in 1846, 9*s.* 6*d.* Self-acting winders were paid in 1820, —; in 1833, 11*s.*; in 1844, 11*s.* 6*d.*; in 1846, 12*s.* 3*d.* Piecers were paid in 1820, 7*s.*; in 1833, 6*s.*; in 1844, 7*s.*; in 1846, 7*s.* 6*d.* In 1820 the time worked was much longer than at present; he was not aware of the exact number of hours a day worked, but he believed it was thirteen. At present it was twelve hours. So that the wages had gone on increasing, although the Legislature had to some extent interfered, and though the time worked was diminished. He believed, and he asked any hon. Member connected with the cotton manufacture to contradict him if he were wrong, that the alterations which had been made in the mode of production was so great, that the quantity produced had increased to five times what it was then. Now, that being the case, he must say that it seemed very strange that the value of the goods produced should have diminished by one-third; it was quite contrary to the doctrines of the "feelosophers;" and it was equally contrary to those doctrines that we should have interfered with labour, and yet wages have increased notwithstanding. In 1815 the cotton consumed in this country was 6,000 bales a week; in 1846 it was 30,460 bales. In 1815 cotton cost 1*s.* 7½*d.* a pound; the selling price of twist being 3*s.* 3*d.* a pound. In 1846 cotton cost 6¼*d.* a pound, and twist sold at 10*d.* a pound. In 1815 the speed of the throstles was 3,500 revolutions per minute; in 1846 it was 5,000 and upwards. In 1815 the throstles usually intrusted to each hand had 216 spindles; in 1846 they had 480. In like manner the mules had 180 and 500 at those dates. These statements he had received from parties who he had every reason to believe were good authorities on such subjects; and it was for that reason that he had gone to Manchester, in order to be able to see for himself. There was a curious fact which he had been told with respect to operative cotton spinners. Some one observed to him in Manchester, that a cotton spinner never died; for that by the time he arrived at forty or forty-five years, such an effect was produced on his eyes by the small particles of cotton, and the difficulty in seeing such fine threads, that he soon became disabled from working any longer; and he was sure, therefore, to be got rid of for some reason or other. That had been represented to him; and it was a most important matter for the House to consider. When he was at Manchester, on walking through one of the cotton mills, he found the atmosphere very disagreeable, and the whole place like a hothouse, and he consequently asked why they did not open the windows. He was first told that it would not be quite so well to have the windows open; and when he asked why not, and whether it would not be quite as well for the health of the workpeople, he at last got at the fact that they would not be quite so well able to spin cotton in a lower atmosphere. It appeared, therefore, to be necessary to this manufacture to keep all these poor girls all day long suffering from a state of perspiration, from which, and from being obliged to go home in a state of relaxation and lassitude, all manner of diseases befel them, and, in fact, they became deteriorated both in body and mind. He had stated the general results of the inspection of these mills that he had made at Manchester, and not having any interest in manufactures, he trusted he was able to form a correct view. Having invariably voted for this measure, he had never given a vote with a more conscientious conviction that he was doing his duty between master and man, than he should now feel in voting for the second reading.

Mr. BRIGHT said, after the repeated allusions which had been made to him in the course of the debate by the hon. Member for Dorsetshire and the hon. Member for Birmingham, as well as by several other hon. Members, he was sure he should not ask the House in vain to allow him a fair opportunity of stating the grounds on which he was compelled entirely to differ from those hon. Gentlemen on that most important question. And, first, he might state, as he had stated before, that in addition to all the means of judging, which many hon. Members in that House possessed on this question, from their knowledge of the science of political economy or from their other sources, he had this additional means of coming to a decision on the matter, that all his life he had lived among the population for whom they were called upon to legislate—that he had been largely, and was now very largely, connected with this particular trade—that he had not a farthing in the world that was not invested in that trade—and that he believed, from his habit of association with the working classes of Lancashire, he had as good a right to speak of their feelings and wishes, and, from his careful investigation of this question, to speak also of their true interests, as any Member in that House could possibly have. But let it not be supposed for a moment—for he would deny it altogether—that in his opposition to this Ten Hours Bill he was influenced by a belief that it would in any degree, if passed, injure his property or his personal prospects. It was clear to him, and all he had ever said on the subject must have made it appear so to others, that if this measure were calculated to advance the interests of the twelve hundred thousand persons who were more or less interested in the cotton trade, and in the other branches of trade mixed up with it, then his interests must be consulted in that which would advance the interests of by far the largest proportion of those who were in any way connected with those trades. Now he would beg of the House to observe what was the principle on which the whole of the agitation for short time in factories had been conducted. That agitation had been conducted on the political economy of the hon. Member for Birmingham; on the political economy of the hon. Member for Oldham; on the political economy of the late Mr. Sadler; and on the political economy which that House had last Session most emphatically declared to be unsound and rotten, which, if persevered in, must promote that depression which for many years prevailed in the great interests of the country, and which, in point of fact, was calculated to destroy the manufacturing supremacy of this country. When the agitation first commenced, it was on the principle of protection for infants. Young children were then the objects of solicitude with these patriotic individuals; and at length a Minister of the Crown—he believed the late Lord Spencer—brought in a Bill some years ago which took all the care of these infants that their greatest friends could desire. Subsequently the right hon. Baronet the late Secretary of State for the Home Department brought in a Bill still farther limiting the labour of these children, and reducing it to six hours a day, going farther than the greatest advocate for short time ever wished to go. Well, then, as far as infants were concerned, all that was required had already been effected, as up to the age of 13 no child could work more than six hours a day in a factory. But when that measure passed, the friends, so called, of the infants still pressed on, and they now asked for the interference of the Legislature and for a display of their sympathies in favour of young persons from 13 to 18 years of age, and in behalf of women of all ages. Now, as he had said years ago, the object of these parties from the beginning was not what they pretended it to be, first of all to regulate the labour and to take care of those under 13 years of age, and now of those under 18 years of age, and of women of all ages; but their object was this, by law to interfere with the labour of all persons of whatever age, and whatever sex they might be, who were engaged in the manufactures of this country, and to give to all these classes that measure of legislative protection—he used the word "protection" in the sense in which it had been used by all those who were in favour of monopolies—a protection that would diminish the hours of labour, while it would continue a rate of wages which, from the days of Sadler to the present time, was clearly a rate higher than labour in a free market could command. Now, he would ask, was not this the object of the present Bill? He recollected that the noble Lord the Member for Lynn, in speaking on this subject last year, used these words:—

> "If I were also to say that great profits ought to be reduced, might I not also add, that it is one of the great scandals of the present day that enormous fortunes are amassed by the few, while the profits to the many are miserably small. If there should arise out of this measure a fairer division of profits, no very great mischief would be done. We shall not, I presume, be told the profits of the cotton trade are so small that the master manufacturers cannot afford to share them more with the operatives they employ, when we reflect that out of the superfluous profits arising from the cotton manufactures, we have an instance of a quarter of a million fund having been subscribed to promote a repeal of the corn laws."

Why, did any one ever hear of such a proposition—to transfer what the noble Lord called the superflous profits of the manufacturer, and to hand them over to the workmen whom he employed? If they were to come to the noble Lord's class, and to ask for the superfluous rents of the landlords, and the superfluous profits of the farmers, in order to hand them over to the agricultural labourers, he wondered what would be said; but he, for one, would denounce such a proposition to be as mischievous as he now denounced the proposition which received the support of the noble Lord to be. He would wish to ask the House what were the precise facts and arguments laid before them to induce them to consent to this measure? The old arguments of Lord Ashley had not, with perhaps the exception of a letter, which the noble Lord opposite had read, from Lancashire, been repeated. He believed Lord Ashley's own friends would not now credit these sentiments. He believed it was admitted, that there never was an attempt made to induce the House of Commons to adopt any question, where there were a greater number of exaggerations, and statements unsustained by facts, made use of, than had been put forward some years ago on this question of factory labour. The noble Lord read a letter from Dr. Fletcher, a gentleman residing in the town of Bury, and who was known to be a strenuous advocate for the short-time Bill. But Dr. Fletcher's opinion was not worth more than the opinions of those whose duty it was officially to record and to investigate all these matters. Now, he found, for example, that in Leeds, where there was an immense number of factories, the mortality of 1831 was actually less than for 1801. He found that the mortality in Leeds was less than that of Bristol; that in Manchester the mortality was less than that in Liverpool. He found, also, that the mortality in large manufacturing towns was not greater than in large towns where there were no factories; and, what was more, he had the evidence of Dr. Philips, who had written a very excellent work on scrofula and its treatment, that the health of those employed in factories was not in any degree worse than the health of others of the labouring classes employed in factory towns; and that if they went to masons, or carpenters, or shoemakers, or other artisans, the mortality among them was fully as great as among those employed in factories. There was one consideration which the House ought to bear in mind with respect to the employment of women in factories. The assertion was, that their labour in factories was extremely hard and long-continued; but how did it happen that women were found in factories at all? The very fact that they were there in such large numbers, was conclusive evidence that the labour in factories was not hard. ["Oh!"] He would ask the hon. Member who disputed that proposition to turn to any occupation of a very laborious character in which women were employed, Why did not women become stone-masons? Why did they not work carrying hods of bricks upon their shoulders? Why did they not work at the spade? Because they naturally turned to those employments where they were sheltered from the weather, and where labour was lightest; and the very fact that there were 200,000 women employed in factories was conclusive evidence that the labour in those factories was light, and of a nature which was suitable for women. He would not go into the question of the state of health of factory labourers, or else he might read statements which could not be disputed, and which referred not to England only, but to France, and which were equally conclusive as regarded both countries on the subject. He would, however, give the House one or two extracts. Dr. Philips said—

> "If there be anything peculiarly injurious to life in factory towns or factory labour, it is not made apparent by a register of deaths. The injurious effects of factory labour, when compared with other laborious occupations, are not apparent in our mortality tables, or in the returns of friendly societies. And the mortality in factory towns appears to press just as heavily on masons, shoemakers, and tailors, in those towns, as upon those persons who are employed in factories; and it would, therefore, seem improper to refer to manufactures an evil which is not peculiar to them."

And, again, he said—

> "The evidence I have collected upon the question of the influence of factory labour upon human life, has produced upon my own mind a strong conviction, that occupation in factories, though in many respects less to be desired than occupation in the open air, is yet accompanied by so many counteracting circumstances, that the evils which may be inseparable from that occupation are mitigated, if not counteracted, by the increased means of procuring the necessaries of life which it affords. The evils of factory towns do not consist in factory employment, but in the agencies which are commonly found operative in such towns."

There was one more witness on this subject to which he should call the attention of the House, and that was, the report of the Committee on the ten hours' system, appointed by the House of Representatives of Massachusetts, and which was presented to the House on the 10th of March, 1845—

> "In regard to the health of the operatives employed in the mills, your committee believe it to be good. The testimony of the female petitioners does not controvert this position in general, though it does in particular instances. The population of the city of Lowell is now rising 26,000, of which number about 7,000 are females employed in the mills. It is the opinion of Dr. Kimball, an eminent physician of Lowell, with whom the committee had an interview, that there is less sickness among the persons at work in the mills than there is amongst those who do not work in the mills; and that there is less sickness now than there was several years ago, when the number was much less than at present. This we understood to be also the opinion of the city physician, Dr. Wells, from whose published report for the present year we learn, that the whole number of deaths in Lowell, during the year 1844, was 362, of which number 200 were children under ten years of age. The decrease of the mortality of Lowell, Dr. Wells attributes in part to the enlightened policy of the city government, in directing the construction of common sewers, and the enterprise of individuals in multiplying comfortable habitations, the establishment of a hospital supported by the liberality of the corporations, for the accommodation of the sick in their employ. The more general diffusion of a knowledge of the laws of health is also conducive to the same end."

Now, the hon. Member for Dorsetshire spoke of the impossibility of persons obtaining education under the system of twelve hours' labour. The hon. Member should understand that he (Mr. Bright) was not defending the principle that these persons should work for twelve hours a day. He was merely meeting the argument which the hon. Member advanced in favour of this Bill. Did the hon. Member for Dorsetshire forget that those children did not work more than six hours a day until they were thirteen years old? For himself, he could say that he had never been at school after he was fifteen years of age. It was true, there were, no doubt, many things which hon. Members knew or learned by remaining at college until they were twenty or twenty-one, of which he was ignorant; but still, he considered his own case to be in some degree a proof that a man might get some education by remaining at school only until he was fifteen, and that he might do something by remaining there even if he was thirteen. But what could be more ludicrous than to say that a person could get no education under thirteen? The old system was to bind apprentices at the age of fourteen. But he would maintain that the degree of education among factory labourers was not inferior to that to be found among all the other classes of this country. He had no doubt whatever but that their consumption of books, their purchase of newspapers, and their general devotion to literature, which the present age afforded so many opportunities of encouraging, was as pure and as extensive at least as that of any other class of the labouring population of Great Britain. If the hon. Gentleman the Member for Dorsetshire was not yet convinced on this point, he would beg to bring before him the evidence of the Rev. Mr. Clay, who had compiled a list of the extent of criminality existing in various classes in Lancashire. He began with No. 1, and went up to No. 20, the first number showing the class among which crime was highest, and the last the class in which there was the smallest number of criminals. Now, No. 19 in that list was the class of domestic servants, and No. 20 was that of the female operatives in factories, while No. 1 was the class of grooms and coach helpers, persons who were much more extensively employed by the Members of that House than by cotton spinners. Now, if the factory labourers were not the sober and orderly class of persons of which the noble Lord had spoken, he believed Mr. Clay would not have produced evidence like this. He believed there was not a magistrate in the manufacturing districts who would not bear testimony to the good conduct of these persons, and to the fact that their good behaviour even exceeded that of other classes in the same counties. He now came to the question of wages, and to what the working classes wanted. The hon. Member for Dorsetshire produced a roll of a petition, and dwelt on the importance to be attached to it; but he remembered the time when a petition which required six men to carry it, and which bore 700,000 signatures, was presented against the corn laws, and yet that hon. Member and his friends did not care a straw about it. It had been said by several speakers, why should factory labourers be obliged to work longer than mechanics and others—why should they work a greater number of hours than the men who made the steam-engines or the machinery at which they were employed, and who only worked ten hours a day? He would only say in reply to this argument, that if any Member in the House was connected with a locomotive manufactory, he would be able to bear him out in this fact, that if any man started a factory for the construction of machinery in Yorkshire, and were to make it a rule that no man should work more than ten hours a day in it, the result would be that he would not get a single good workman to remain on his premises, and that he would be obliged to close the establishment altogether in a very short time. The fact was, that these men called ten hours a day's labour; but they invariably worked longer than ten hours, and had a stipulation with their employers to receive for the first two hours so much, and for the next two hours so much more; and if they worked during the night, which they were always delighted to do, they were to receive an increase of pay beyond that which they would be entitled to in the day time. Now what did that prove, except that men would, among operatives as well as among themselves, work very hard for the sake of obtaining money. Why, for instance, did lawyers work so hard? He did not speak of lawyers as persons who would do more for money than other persons. On the contrary, he believed they would not. But his argument was, that in every class they would find men working themselves literally to death, and that, too, even when not tied to a steam engine, or with an Act of Parliament to compel them, but because they had wives and families to keep up, or children to provide for, or because they were looking forward to some point which they had not yet reached, and were striving to be as well off as their neighbours. So it was among the working classes; and in interfering with their right so to exert themselves, the House was violating one of the greatest privileges and one of the dearest rights of these people, and was interfering with a feeling as strong amongst operatives as among any other class in the community. But the hon. Member said, he believed the operatives were willing to have short time, even accompanied with short wages. He begged to deny that assertion altogether. He denied, first of all, that the question had been put in that light to them at any of the meetings that had been held on the subject; and, in the second place, he denied that the working classes had the slightest idea that there would be a reduction of wages in consequence of the passing of this Bill. If, then, such were the facts—if it were the fact that hon. Members on both sides of the House believed, as they must believe, that a reduction of wages would follow a reduction of the hours of labour—and if the working classes had no idea that such a result would follow, while the House proposed to pass the measure because it was demanded by the working classes: then he could not conceive a guilt more dreadful than the practising of such a delusion on the operatives, and the passing of a Bill, at their desire, which, instead of conferring a benefit on them, as they supposed, would cause a greater evil to them than perhaps any measure which that House had ever passed. Now, what had the working classes been taught? He should be obliged to trouble the House with one or two short extracts on this point. There was a publication called the *Ten Hours Advocate*, established to support this Bill, and in that periodical, of the 5th of December last, he found these words:—

> "We have contended from our first connexion with the advocacy of this measure, that the effect of a Ten Hours Bill would not be to diminish wages in the same proportion. It is a recognised principle in political economy, that any movement or circumstance which lessens the supply of an article enhances its value in the market."

On the 14th of November they stated—

> "On that occasion we cited numerous instances where the number of working hours had been reduced, and in every case the result was an advance of wages."

And in a letter from Mr. Oastler, which appeared in the same publication, he said—

> "Were I, a factory worker, asked by my employer to sign for 'ten hours and present wages,' I should say, 'No, thank you, Sir,' always supposing ten hours were universal."

He believed, that so far from telling the working classes that wages would necessarily fall after the passing of this Bill, the advocates of the measure actually told them that wages would rise. [Mr. FERRAND: Hear.] He perceived that the hon. Member for Knaresborough was of that opinion; and, in the publication to which he had alluded, this doctrine was clearly put forward. On September 26th they said—

> "The terms of the agreement go upon the presumption that a diminution of produce would be coequal with the reduction of time; whereas every person at all acquainted with the nature of factory labour must know that such could not be the result."

Now, he did not hesitate to say, that no man could know anything of factory labour, or of the internal arrangements of factories, who was not aware that it was impossible to stop labour for even five minutes without reducing the production of that particular mill. But this *Ten Hours Advocate* went on to say—

> "Did the wages of this class of factory workers fall in proportion?—Certainly not. Again, in 1844, Sir J. Graham further reduced their working hours from eight hours per day to six; and the effect was, not only that their wages were not reduced, but actually increased."

The object of this was clearly to show that wages would not only not be diminished, but would be actually increased, by the adoption of the ten hours system. He would ask the hon. Gentlemen who supported this view to take the case of a child who was 12 years 11 months old, and another who was 13 years and 1 month old, and he would ask any man who was acquainted with the fact, whether the wages earned by the one would not show an increase of nearly one-half over that of the other? The writer went on—

> "But it must be clear to the most inattentive observer, that it would be unwise in the extreme, on their part, to bind themselves to a reduction of wages, without the prospect of any corresponding advantages either morally or physically."

Why, he thought that all the advantages of this proposed system were to be moral and physical. It would appear, however, that the advocates of the ten hours system expected the advantage to be an increase of wages, and a payment at least of twelve hours' wages for ten hours' work. There was one other point of importance, which had not been much discussed that day except by the right hon. Gentleman the Chancellor of the Exchequer, and that was, the effect of foreign competition. He did not appeal, on this point, to the hon. Member for Birmingham, or to the hon. Member for Oldham, because he believed they were quite incapable of understanding the question of foreign competition. This arose from a feeling existing in their minds, that there was a natural superiority on the part of Englishmen, which rendered foreign competition in any matter impossible. It was different, however, with regard to the right hon. Gentleman who was now Chancellor of the Exchequer, or with the noble Lord the Member for Lynn, who aspired to that office. With them, the question must become one for consideration. He was sorry to detain the House; but he thought it would be an insult both to those who asked for this measure, and to those who opposed it, if the question were not to be fairly and fully discussed. He held in his hand a statement of the quantity of the raw materials consumed in various manufactures in this country, and also of the decrease which must take place if the Ten Hours Bill passed. In the cotton trade alone, there were consumed last year more than 600,000,000 of pounds weight of the raw material. In the woollen and worsted trades, 260,000,000 lbs. In the flax trade, more than 177,000,000 lbs.; and in the silk trade, more than 6,000,000 of pounds weight: making in all, 1,057,000,000 lbs. Now if this were to be divided by six, the diminution that was calculated to follow the passing of the Ten Hours Bill, it would give a reduction of no less than 176,000,000 lbs. He asked then, was it possible that a measure which would cut off at once this vast supply, amounting to one-sixth of all the manufactures of this country, could be discussed in that House without adverting to that fact, or passed without creating confusion and disaster in all parts of the country? Again, let them look to their exports. In 1844, the amount of their exports in cotton was 26,000,000*l.*; of woollens, 9,000,000*l.*; of linens, 4,000,000*l.*; and of silks, 750,000*l.*: in all, 39,750,000*l.*; from which, if one-sixth were to be cut off, it would reduce the exports at one blow by a sum of 6,600,000*l.* He would ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, how would it be possible to carry on the affairs of this country with a diminution of their exports and imports to the extent which he had mentioned, and amounting in the exports alone to between six and seven millions annually? He would also beg to tell the hon. Member for Dorsetshire, that of the wool consumed in the woollen manufactures of this country, no less than 200,000,000 lbs. at the least was grown in this country; and that one manufacturer alone would, by a reduction of the hours of labour from twelve to ten hours a day, consume from 12,000 to 15,000 lbs. a week less than he now used. He had attended some fifteen or twenty meetings in Manchester during the last three months. He believed at every one of these meetings this question had been discussed; and he could tell the House that he never found a single individual, either present at or absent from those meetings, who acknowledged that the working classes would accept the Bill, if they did not believe that the rate of wages would be maintained precisely as they were at present. And he could tell hon. Gentlemen opposite, that, notwithstanding his opposition to the Bill, he was not afraid to go before that or any other constituency in Lancashire, as far as this Bill was concerned. Wherever he was best known, and that was the nearer he went towards home, no one would accuse him of a want of sympathy with the working classes; but this he would tell the House, that if they went on, at the bidding of the working classes, to legislate against the capitalists, they would find a very different feeling engendered among the latter towards the operatives, from that which they now exhibited. Now, to show that the capitalists were not unmindful of those whom they employed, he might state that some of his own workmen had petitioned for this Bill; and he was glad of it, for it showed their independence, and that they dared to exercise a will of their own. At the very last meeting held on the subject in the town of Rochdale, there were many independent manufacturers on the platform, while their workmen were in the body of the meeting; but yet none of them attempted to interfere, for if they had done so they would have been laughed to scorn in that part of the country. He would wish that the same could be said of the working classes in other parts of the kingdom. In the factory with which he was himself connected, in that town they had a large infant school, together with a reading-room, and news-room, and a school for adults, where the workmen attended after working hours. They had also a person employed, at a very considerable expense, who devoted his whole time to investigating the concerns of the workmen, and who was a kind of missionary among them. Not a few hundreds of pounds per annum were expended in promoting in this manner the interests of the workmen; and that, too, wholly independent of any act of the Legislature. This was the case at many other wealthy factories; but he would warn the House that if they now armed the workmen against the capitalists by fixing by law ten hours, or any other number of hours for the duration of labour, and thus interfered with the established custom of the kingdom, he believed it would be impossible that the feeling which hitherto existed on the part of the manufacturers towards the operatives would continue, should the workmen think that by coming to that House they could fix the time of work and the amount of wages. He thought, if such a result took place, that it would be the duty of the manufacturers—nay, that it would be absolutely necessary for them—to take such steps as would prevent the ruin from coming upon them which must result from the passing of this measure. The hon. Gentleman the Member for Birmingham stated that he (Mr. Bright) had signed a petition in favour of a Ten Hours Bill. The hon. Gentleman, however, was mistaken as to the year in which that transaction took place. He confessed that at one time he did get up and signed a petition in favour of such a Bill, but then it was one of the acts of his boyhood; and he regretted extremely that the follies of his boyhood appeared to attach themselves to the mature age of the hon. Member for Birmingham. A proposition had been made, that if this Bill went into Committee, they should have an eleven hours clause substituted for the present ten hours clause. He believed nothing could be more unwise than the adoption by the House of such a course. The working classes were either right or wrong in asking for a Ten Hours Bill; and the House was either right or wrong in making any change at all in their favour. He thought, therefore, it was a cowardly shrinking on their part if they did not carry out the principle of the hon. Member for Oldham. If they passed an Eleven Hours Bill, every workman who asked for ten hours would say, "The House of Commons has sanctioned the principle we advocated, and the object we have in view." They would come with double force to ask for a Ten Hours Bill hereafter; and this he would say, that no hon. Member who now voted for an Eleven Hours Bill, could in the next Parliament—should he be a Member of it—refuse to vote for a Ten Hours Bill. Before he concluded, he could not avoid saying that he was astounded at the conduct of Her Majesty's Ministers on this question. He asked was it a question that should be left an open question? For his part, he confessed that he regarded it to be a question of as great importance as that which had been settled last year under the auspices of the right hon. Baronet the Member for Tamworth. That was a question of protection—the object being to raise rents at the expense of raising the price of food. In this case the protection was to raise wages at the expense of capital. It was precisely the same principle that was involved in both cases; and he would ask, was it possible when the House, after generations of error in the way of protection, had adopted a right course, that they should now, in the very next Session of Parliament, seek to adopt, for the benefit of another class in the community, a law equally unsound, and which, if passed, would, at no distant day, have to be repealed like the corn law. Instead of leaving this an open question, he thought the noble Lord at the head of Her Majesty's Government ought to have come forward manfully, and have made this a Cabinet question. He thought that the Government ought to have taken the responsibility of such an enormous change upon themselves; and that, if the noble Lord considered the alteration dangerous, the weight of the Government, and of all in office, should be given in opposition to the Bill. He would not detain the House farther; but believing, as he did in his heart, that the proposition was most injurious and destructive to the best interests of the country—believing that it was contrary to all principles of sound legislation—that it was a delusion practised upon the working classes — that it was advocated by those who had no knowledge of the economy of manufactures — believing that it was one of the worst measures ever passed in the shape of an Act of the Legislature, and that, if it were now made law, the necessities of trade, and the demands alike of the workmen and of the masters, would compel them to retrace the steps they had taken; believing this, he felt compelled to give the Motion for the second reading of this Bill his most strenuous opposition.

Sir A. LEITH HAY moved the adjournment of the debate.

On the Question of the adjournment,

Lord JOHN RUSSELL said: Sir, I rise only to say a few words to the House, in consequence of the attack which has been made upon me a few minutes before six o'clock by the hon. Gentleman who has just sat down. Sir, I really think that if the hon. Gentleman intended to make that attack, he had better have made it at five o'clock than at this hour. I really think that the hon. Gentleman's zeal on the part of the cotton manufacturers, and those for whom he has spoken, has rather led him to fail in that fairness and candour which usually characterize him. The hon. Gentleman supposes that a great question of principle is at stake. Now, I do not conceive that the question between twelve hours and eleven hours and ten hours is a question of principle. I conceive that the question of limiting the hours of labour of those between 13 and 18, is not a new principle, but one that has been already affirmed by the House, if I recollect rightly, on the proposition of the late Lord Althorp. What I know is, that it is a principle which has been sanctioned by the statutes of the realm; and it is, therefore, no new principle at all. I believe there is no new principle introduced by this Bill—no principle that is not found in the old law of the realm; because, under the old laws, apprentices, during their apprenticeship, were protected by the law. It is not, therefore, a question of principle; but the question is, whether the Legislature, having determined to extend protection to this class, to what extent that protection is to be given—whether a limitation of labour to twelve hours, or eleven hours, or ten hours a day? That, I think, is a question of detail, on which I believe the Members of Her Majesty's Government may differ without any difference of principle existing among them. I conceive that we have, all in this House, agreed on a principle; and if the hon. Member differs from that principle, and if he thinks that the Legislature is wrong in interfering in the matter at all, then his course should be to move for the repeal of the laws already enacted, and to call on the House to leave persons of that tender age entirely free to make their bargains as they can. Sir, I know not that I should enter now into the question at large. I have stated what I think the general principle is; and if the debate is to be adjourned, I shall be ready to resume the subject on a future day. ["No, no!" *and* "Divide!"] I do not mean to address myself more than a few moments to the question, and I am quite ready either to say now, or on some future debate, what my opinion is on this matter. ["Go on!"] I consider, then, the question being not a question of principle but of degree, that the period during which these young persons labour at present in the factory of twelve hours, being thirteen or fourteen hours of employment altogether, is too much. I conceive it is too much for their bodily form, which is then not matured, but which is only in its progress towards maturity. I consider it is too much for the proper development of their moral and mental improvement, which at that time ought to be particularly attended to. I conceive, therefore, that, as a question of degree, a shorter period than twelve hours would be preferable to the present period of labour. Am I then to be deterred from this view by what I admit, with the hon. Gentleman, is a desirable matter to consider—the fear of foreign competition? Sir, that is another question, which is of the utmost importance; but with regard to it, I certainly feel greatly comforted by the reflection, that the destruction of our manufactures from this cause, has been repeatedly urged in former years as a reason for our not interfering with the hours of labour. It was urged in 1833—urged in 1836; but notwithstanding that these fears had not been attended to, or acted on, I find that the cotton manufactures of this country have been increased, and, I am happy to say, have flourished, since these periods, while those young persons have at the same time benefited by our interference. In America, they have been, I believe, already allowed a period equivalent to three or four months in the year; and if a reduction were now made here from twelve to eleven hours a day, the alteration would not amount to more than about twenty-five days in the year. I shall not detain the House further; but really, after the hon. Gentleman's attack upon me at this time of the evening, I could not remain altogether silent.

Debate adjourned.

House adjourned at Six o'clock.

HOUSE OF LORDS,

Thursday, February 11, 1847.

MINUTES.] PUBLIC BILLS.—3ª and passed:—Chelsea Pensions.

PETITIONS PRESENTED. From Fife, and several other places, against the Use of Sugar in Distilleries, and against the Admission of Rum except upon the Payment of a Fixed Duty.—By Earl Radnor, from Salisbury, and several other places, for the Repeal of the Poor Removal Act.—From Murrick, for the Adoption of such Measures as may ensure the People of Ireland such a Supply of Food as will save them from Starvation.—From Board of Guardians of the Monaghan Union, against Out-door Relief (Ireland).—From Malt Distillers of Elgin, Banff, and other places, against the Proposed Measure for Lowering the Duty on Malt.

POOR REMOVAL ACT.

LORD WALSINGHAM presented a petition from the Swaffham Union, in the county of Norfolk, against the present law of settlement, and praying for the substitution of a general national rate. Of such a proposition he desired to guard himself against being supposed the advocate; but if it could be shown that the market for the labourer's labour was restricted by the existing system—if it could be shown that the landowners in one parish pulled down the cottages, thereby compelling the labourers to live in another place, making it a difficulty to the poor to find habitations, and transferring the burden of the maintenance of the poor from parishes of one kind, which received the name of close, to others which were called open parishes, he thought that some ground for inquiry on the part of their Lordships would be made out. He was glad to learn that it was the intention of the noble Duke (the Duke of Richmond) to move for a Committee on this subject; and he thought it would be desirable to consider whether relief might not be given to the poor man, not from the funds of a parish or from a national rate, but from an assessment levied equally throughout a union.

The **Duke of RICHMOND** thought that a more clumsy measure never received the sanction of Parliament than the Act passed last year. He believed that it was originally proposed in a more extensive form; but one half was taken away and the other half left, and now the lawyers in this country did not agree as to how it was to be worked. He thought that it had done a great deal of mischief. He was convinced that nothing could be more mischievous than continual alterations of the law of settlement. He found that in another place a Committee had been appointed, on the Motion of the First Lord of the Treasury, to inquire into this subject. He (the Duke of Richmond) was not in his place when his noble Friend opposite stated that it was not the intention of the Government to move for a similar Committee in this House; but, as he considered it a matter of great importance, he (the Duke of Richmond) begged to give notice, that he would move for the appointment of a Committee to consider the question. He would give the noble Marquess opposite an early intimation of the day on which he proposed to bring forward his Motion, and he would also move that the Lords be summoned.

Earl FITZWILLIAM agreed that some difficulty had been occasioned by the Act of last Session; but he approved of the general scope and principle of that law, and believed that inconvenience had arisen solely in consequence of the incomplete manner in which it was drawn. He thought it worth the consideration of Parliament whether it might not be desirable to introduce into the English poor law some of the provisions of the Irish law. His noble Friend opposite (the Duke of Richmond) was aware that when a pauper came before an Irish board of guardians, the first question was, whether he should be admitted into the House, or, in other words, whether he should have relief or no; and the next question was, upon what electoral district he should be charged, or whether he should be charged upon the union at large. Now, he (Earl Fitzwilliam) was inclined to think this was a regulation which it would not be inexpedient to introduce into the English poor law. He thought it a question deserving consideration, whether boards of guardians might not, within their own unions, be allowed to determine upon what parish the paupers should be chargeable. The administration of the Irish poor law, so far as he had any opportunity of judging, had in this respect been conducted with perfect fairness and impartiality. He considered that by adopting a similar system in this country, they would get rid of many of the inconveniences arising from questions of settlement. In fact, it would, to a certain extent, place the question of settlement within the union in the power of the board of guardians, and, in his opinion, would be attended with very beneficial effects.

Lord BEAUMONT observed, that in many cases, persons in the country found it a profitable speculation to run up small cottages, which were let to the lowest class of labourers at the highest rate that could be obtained. As it was found next to impossible to obtain rates from the occupiers of these cottages, a list, called the "excused list," by which they were exempted from payment, was usually presented to the magistrates to be allowed; but, if the magistrates refused to allow such list, the ratepayers were unwilling to proceed to levy upon these occupiers, because they found it cheaper to excuse them from payment of the rates, than to have them thrown upon the rates for maintenance. He (Lord Beaumont) considered that a remedy for this evil had been suggested and recommended by the Committee appointed last year to inquire into the burdens affecting landed property. That remedy was, that occupiers of cottage tenements under a certain value—he believed it was 6*l*. a year—should not be called upon to pay rates; but that the landlords, instead of the occupiers, should be answerable for the rates. He (Lord

Beaumont) sincerely hoped that this suggestion would not be lost sight of. He would not for a moment attempt to defend the machinery or the wording of the Poor Removal Act of the last Session; but he contended that the principle of that Bill was just to the ratepayer, and generous to the pauper. It was generous to the pauper, because it prevented him from being bandied about from parish to parish; and it was just to the ratepayer, because the parish called upon to provide for the pauper must, during a period of five years, have received the benefit of his industry; and, if he were a ratepayer, have derived the advantage of his contributions for that time. The Act, he considered, was also just to the relieved parishes, because, under the old law, although a man had a legal settlement in a parish, that parish might possibly have derived no benefit whatever from his industry, or from his payment of rates. So far the principle of the Act was just; but when he looked at the interpretation which had been put upon it, he was astounded to see how that principle had been set at defiance. He understood the intention of Parliament to be this, that, in the calculation of the five years which gave the pauper a claim to irremovability, any period during which he was in the receipt of parochial relief should not be included; but that the residence required should be five years' strict industrial residence. Great hardships might result from the interpretation which had been put upon the law; inasmuch as a person, during the whole or part of the period of five years' residence by which he gained a settlement in a parish, might be receiving parochial relief from the place of his original settlement. Such an interpretation he conceived to be totally at variance with the principle of the Act.

The EARL of STRADBROKE thought that in any future law that might be adopted on this subject, provision should be made for rating all property; for he conceived that the exemption of property from rates was frequently attended with very bad effects. He was acquainted with cases of persons who derived incomes of several hundred pounds a year from such small tenements as had been referred to by the noble Lord (Lord Beaumont), and who yet evaded the payment of rates by getting their property placed in the excused lists.

LORD WALSINGHAM observed, with reference to the suggestion of the noble Earl (Earl Fitzwilliam), that if they allowed boards of guardians to determine upon what parishes paupers should be chargeable, they would call upon them to decide one of the most difficult questions connected with the law of settlement.

DUTIES ON RUM.

The DUKE of RICHMOND presented petitions from the malt-distillers of Elgin, Banff, and Inverness, and from Huntly, in the county of Aberdeen, against the reduction of the duty on rum. The Government contended that the interests of the distillers would not be injured by the proposed reduction; and, if so, he saw no reason why the distillers should not be heard before a Committee of either House of Parliament. The distillers did not object to fair competition with the colonies, but they thought that a greater measure of protection ought to be given to them, at least so long as so obnoxious a tax as that on malt was continued.

LORD MONTEAGLE said, that both the Irish and the Scotch distillers contended that the Government had been misinformed. They only asked for a countervailing duty; and they complained that the calculation of the Government had been made on the spirit, without any calculation on the latent duty on malt. He had himself known a distiller who had to pay 1,400*l.* duty for one week's operations, although the wash was all lost in consequence of the failure of the vessel in which it was contained. The colonial distiller was subjected to no loss of that kind. The matters in dispute between the colonial and British distillers lay in a small compass, and might easily be investigated in one or two days; and he hoped, therefore, that Her Majesty's Government would grant an inquiry into the subject.

House adjourned.

HOUSE OF COMMONS,

Thursday, February 11, 1847.

MINUTES.] PUBLIC BILLS.—1° Arrest for Debt (Ireland) Railways.

Reported.—Distilling from Sugar.

3° and passed:—Brewing from Sugar.

PETITIONS PRESENTED. From Hammersmith, for Inquiry respecting the Rajah of Sattara.—By Mr. H. Berkeley, from Bristol, for Repeal of the Duty on Copper Ores.—By Mr. Wilshere, from Great Yarmouth, for carrying into effect the Recommendations of the Select Committee respecting Lighthouses.—By Mr. M. Philips, from Edwin Stott, of Manchester, complaining of Surcharge (Property Tax).—By Colonel Arbuthnott, from Kincardineshire, against the Reduction of Duty on Rum.—By Sir John Hobhouse, from Nottingham, for Reduction of Duty on

Tea.—By Mr. Morris, from Carmarthen, respecting the Use of the Welsh Language in the County Courts of Wales.—By Viscount Castlereagh, from Guardians of the Downpatrick Union, for Alteration of the Destitute Persons (Ireland), and Poor Relief (Ireland) Bills.—By Mr. Bright, and Lord John Russell, from several places, in Favour of the Ten Hours Factory Bill.—By Mr. Dillon Browne, from Mayo, for Relief of the Destitute Poor in Ireland.—By Mr. Mitcalfe, from Tynemouth, for Alteration of the Merchant Seamen's Act.—By Mr. Brotherton, from Guardians of the Salford Union, for an Efficient Poor Law (Ireland).—By Sir T. Acland, and other Hon. Members, from several places, for Repeal or Alteration of the Poor Removal Act.—By Mr. S. O'Brien, from Newport (Mayo), for the Employment of more Persons on the Public Works (Ireland).—By Mr. Bright, from several places, for Abolition of the Punishment of Death.—By Colonel Conolly, from Fish Dealers of Liverpool, Manchester, Birmingham, Bath, and Bristol, in Favour of the Railways (Ireland) Bill.

MEASURES FOR IRELAND.

Mr. ROEBUCK begged to ask the noble Lord a question. There were now before the House four Bills touching Ireland. One might be considered as already disposed of, namely, that which was to provide for the immediate relief of the poor in Ireland. It had gone through Committee, and might be considered as having passed that House. Then there was a Bill to render valid certain acts of the Government in Ireland; and there were, besides, the Poor Law Bill, and the Bill which had been laid the previous day on the Table of the House, authorizing the lending of money to the owners of land in Ireland for the improvement of their properties. He had not given notice of his question, but he had no doubt the noble Lord would be disposed to answer it immediately, or, if not, to-morrow. What he wished to know was, whether the noble Lord could inform the House of the order in which the last two Bills would be considered, namely, the Poor Law Bill, and the Bill for lending money to Irish proprietors; whether the noble Lord was prepared to insure the passing of the Poor Law Bill by making it go through its stages *pari passu* with the Bill for sanctioning loans to landlords in Ireland; or whether he intended to proceed with the one separately from the other?

Lord J. RUSSELL had to state in answer, that it was his intention that those two Bills should proceed together. He did not say, as to a particular day, that the one might not stand for Committee before the other; but he should wish them to be read a third time so that they might be sent to the other House of Parliament as nearly as possible at the same time. He had further to inform the hon. and learned Gentleman, that he himself considered that the Bill for granting loans of money to be applied in improving estates, ought not to pass without the Poor Law Bill. On the other hand, he considered that the Poor Law Bill alone, without some such measure as that for lending money to improve estates, might probably fail of its objects, and be a burden without any equivalent advantage.

Mr. SHAW requested the noble Lord (Lord John Russell) to state whether, before he proceeded with the permanent Irish Poor Law Bill, he would be prepared to inform the House what was to be the constitution of the new Poor Law Board. The Poor Law Bill proposed to place great powers in the hands of that Board, and it was but reasonable that the House should know how it was to be formed before they were called upon to confer those powers. Perhaps the noble Lord would have the goodness to say, whether the Bill for the establishment of the new Board would soon be brought in?

Lord J. RUSSELL replied, that there was a Bill in preparation, which, in the heavy pressure of business, had not yet been sufficiently considered. But that Bill he should likewise propose to move very soon. He quite agreed with the right hon. Gentleman, that the constitution of the Board ought to be settled at the same time as the Bill for amending the law in regard to the relief of the poor.

DRAINAGE ACTS (IRELAND).

Sir H. W. BARRON said, that large sums of money had been taken by the landlords of Ireland under Mr. Labouchere's letter, for the purpose of employing the people in drainage operations, and preventing them wasting their energies in what were considered useless public works. He, for one, had done so, and he knew several others who had done the same; but their arrangements had been completely stopped, in consequence of the Board of Works not sending down drainage surveyors to them. He wished to ask his right hon. Friend the Secretary for Ireland, if he could explain to the House, and to the numerous landlords who were awaiting the appointment of those officers to have their works commenced, the reason of the delay which had taken place in appointing the different surveyors? [Mr. Labouchere: Have the works been sanctioned?] The works could not be properly and legally sanctioned, until the surveyors went down and reported to Government; and that was what the landlords complained of, that they were not sanctioned, and that they did not know, therefore, whether they would be able to go on with their works or not.

MR. LABOUCHERE said, he could not answer the question, unless he were acquainted with the particular facts; but he might state generally, that he was quite aware the Board of Works had been obliged to delay much longer than they wished the conducting of the previous examinations, which were necessary before sanctioning the works, as his hon. Friend had stated. The cause of the delay was this, namely, the very great difficulty which was experienced in getting competent surveyors. Whether this was the cause of the delay in this particular instance, he could not say; but he knew it was so in some instances. He assured the hon. Member and the House, that the Board of Works were in all cases anxious that every facility should be given for the commencement of the drainage operations in Ireland.

SIR H. W. BARRON said, it was very important that there should be as little delay as possible, as, unless the drainage operations were commenced immediately, they would interfere with the putting of the crops into the earth.

LAW OF LANDLORD AND TENANT (IRELAND).

MR. S. CRAWFORD rose to move the Resolution of which he had given notice, on the subject of landlords and tenants' rights in Ireland. He said, that the questions had been repeatedly raised in that House—What were the causes of the miserable condition of the population of Ireland? and, who were the parties responsible for that misery? These questions did not appear to have been either answered or understood in that House. He therefore desired to call the attention of the House to certain facts which, he trusted, would show how far the evils of Ireland were the result of the nature of the relationship between landlord and tenant, and how far the landed proprietors were responsible for those evils. If ever there was a time when it was necessary to make that inquiry, it was the present moment, when the people of Ireland were starving; when so much money had been paid by this country for their relief, and when so much more was wanted; when, at the same time, they found Irish landlords stating that the poor rates could not be paid, and attempting to throw off their responsibility when it was suggested to subject them to a proper poor law. It had given him great pain to see resolutions, signed by a leading Peer of Ireland (Lord Monteagle), in which the proposition for extending, even to the limited degree which the noble Lord (Lord John Russell) proposed, to give outdoor relief to the poor of the country, was strongly reprobated; and still more, when he saw even the moderate proposal of appointing relieving officers was reprobated. It gave him the deepest pain to see those resolutions, and made him feel that there was a disposition in the landlords of Ireland to throw off the responsibility which ought to be imposed upon them. He therefore thought it quite right and proper that there should be an inquiry how far the evils of Ireland were owing to the mismanagement of the landed proprietors, in order that they might be made to undergo their proper responsibility. With respect to the present proprietors, he did not impute to them the origin of those evils; but he said that, although they did not originate those evils, they were responsible for the continuance of them. He did not think them equally blameable, but he maintained that they were equally responsible, because the person who inherited property inherited the responsibilities which attached to it; and if the former landed proprietors were the originators of those evils, it was right that the present proprietors should be responsible for the remedies. The first allegation in his resolution was—

> "That it appears from the reports of various committees and commissions, that the system generally adopted in times past in the letting and management of landed property in Ireland, has been one of the main causes of the present distressed state of that country, and the disordered state of its social relations."

The evidences of the truth of this proposition were so numerous in the various reports of committees and commissions, that his only difficuly was in making a selection. He should bring before the House only a few references to the evidence by which his allegation was supported, and he should do so as briefly as possible. The Land Commissioners referred to the confiscations and plantations, and showed the effects produced in Ireland. They said—

> "The confiscations led in many instances to the possession of large tracts, by individuals whose more extensive estates in England made them regardless and neglectful of their properties in Ireland."

They referred to the penal laws, the 40*s.* freehold franchise, and their effects; and they concluded these references with this remark:—

> "Whatever difference of opinion may be put forward or entertained on other points, the testimony given is unfortunately too uniform in representing the unimproved state of extensive districts, the want of employment, and the consequent poverty and hardships under which a large portion of the agricultural population continually labour."

Again, the Committee of 1830, after referring to the multiplied evils produced by the bad management of land, concluded thus:—

> "Your Committee conceive it is the imperative duty of individuals, of the Government, and of the Legislature, to consider what means can be devised to diminish this mass of suffering, and, at the same time, to secure for the country a better economic condition, promoting a better management of estates, and regulating the arrangements between landlord and tenant on rational and useful principles."

He begged to refer to another important evidence upon the subject of the misconduct of Irish landlords—namely, Mr. Leslie Foster. In his examination by the Committee of the Lords, in 1825, he was asked—

> "Is it or is it not the practice of Irish landlords to build, repair, or drain?—They hardly ever do any of these things. Is this not one of the leading causes of the misery of the occupiers?—I think that the misery of the occupying Irish tenantry results from so many circumstances in the conduct of the landlords, that I should very inadequately express what I think if I were to select that one circumstance as one of much importance. It is a cause, so far as it operates; but I can hardly imagine a change in the system of immediate landlords extending merely to such particulars. Any view of their interests or their duties that would lead them to build and repair houses, would lead to so many more important duties, that I can scarcely contemplate that insulated correction."

Again, Mr. Bicheno, in his evidence before the Committee of 1830, said—

> "The distress which exists in Ireland appears to me to be the consequence of the bad relation between landlord and tenant. The landlords of England, and the landlords, I believe, of every other country, find it their interest to cultivate a good understanding with their tenantry; their consequence is derived from this good understanding; and that is done by the landlord treating the tenant with generosity when he is in distress, and by doing acts of kindness to him. I conceive that it is by this means the landlords of England uphold their consequence and dignity; but in Ireland there is no such feeling; all the landlord looks to there is the improvement of his income, and the quantity of rent he can abstract."

These were strong proofs that the evils of Ireland had been produced by the mismanagement and injudicious conduct of Irish landed proprietors. What had been the consequence of the nature of the mode of letting land? In the first place, he found that the system of middlemen had been introduced by the landed proprietors. The landed proprietors complained of the consequences of having middlemen; but the fact was, that they had been wilfully introduced by the former proprietors with the intention of these middlemen subletting to poor tenants. If evil had been the consequence, the landed proprietors of the present day, although not the authors of the system, must take the consequence of it. The result of this system had been, the great subdivision of land; and then the subsequent system of consolidation which had been partially introduced, had aggravated the sufferings of the people by the clearing of lands. Then, again, the poor people were obliged to take land for their potato crop, on which they were dependent. The consequence of all these practices had been the increase of population, the non-improvement of the country, the non-employment of the people, low wages, which could not support men, bad houses, the people relying upon potatoes as their only food, and general disorder. Hence the people were "badly housed, badly fed, badly clothed, badly paid for their labour," and always close on the borders of starvation. It was a remarkable fact, too, that while the people of Ireland were nearly starving, the average exports of corn to this country were 2,500,000 quarters. Even in this melancholy season of starvation, it appeared from the Government returns, that in the first eleven months of 1846 the exports of grain to this country were 1,776,000 quarters. But the fact was, that the farmers were obliged to send off their corn to Liverpool and Scotland in order to get money to pay their rents. The quantity of produce which had been imported into Ireland by the Government, amounted to 180,000 quarters; but the Government could not stop the export of provisions to this country. Rent to the amount of 13,000,000*l.* was drawn from the people of Ireland, and yet all these things occurred. The rents were not returned to the people in the shape of profitable employment—the rents were collected, and the people left starving. The great principle of legislation hitherto with regard to landlord and tenant, was to give extreme power to the landlord for the collection of his rent. He begged to read an extract which he had taken from Mr. Nimmo's evidence before the Committee of the House of Lords. Being asked about the effect of severe distress, he answered—

> "I conceive the principal cause of the distresses and unfortunate situation of the peasantry of Ireland, has arisen from the management of land, which could be carried on upon these (bad) principles only by keeping that power in existence."

The same witness referred to the extraordinary powers of distress given by law, as the means of inducing landlords to accept insolvent tenants, and said—

> "In conducting public works for Government in the counties of Cork and Kerry, he had the greatest difficulty to obtain the application of the money intended for the employment of the poor to their own uses, because the power of the landlord was so excessive that the peasant had no means of resisting that power."

He added—

> "With all the exertions I could make, I cannot but say that frequently, upon paying the persons employed in this way, we have had the drivers alongside of them to receive the money in the one hand as fast as we put it into the other."

Mr. Nimmo also stated it to be a very general practice for the landlords only to give receipts on account of rent, and the tenant, therefore, never knew what claims might be against him. He (Mr. Crawford) begged next to quote an opinion from a higher quarter respecting the effects of the existing law as regarded landlord and tenant. The Marquess of Westmeath said that—

> "He thought the misery of the occupying tenants arose in a great measure from the defective state of the law between landlord and tenant."

Another witness, Mr. Wilson, said—

> "I have known tenants distrained, and their stock, in three or four instances, impounded by five several claimants within the course of ten or fifteen days."

The monster grievance under which Ireland laboured, was the uncertainty of tenure, and, consequently, the uncertainty of obtaining remuneration for the capital and labour which they might expend upon the land. As bearing upon this point, he begged leave to quote a passage from the Landlord and Tenant Commissioners' Report:—

> "In the years 1835 and 1836, and again in 1843, Bills were presented to the House of Commons, of which the object was to secure for tenants compensation for any outlay which they might make of a permanent nature on their farms. We earnestly hope that the Legislature will be disposed to entertain a Bill of this nature, and to pass it into a law with as little delay as is consistent with a full discussion of its principles and details. We are convinced, that in the present state of feeling in Ireland, no single measure can be better calculated to allay discontent, and to promote substantial improvement throughout the country."

The advantages which resulted from giving the tenant security for his capital and labour, were explained in the evidence of several influential gentlemen who were examined before the Landlord and Tenant Commission, and amongst others by Mr. Andrews, agent to the Marquess of Londonderry, and Mr. Hancock, the agent of Lord Lurgan. The latter witness alluded to the influence which tenant security had on the reclamation of land by poor tenants on Lord Lurgan's estate. He stated that those poor persons went on the waste land, trusting to the tenant right, and by their labour brought it into cultivation, thus bettering their own condition, and adding to the permanent improvement of the country. The cause usually assigned for the horrible condition of the population of Ireland, was the number of small holdings in that country; but, in his opinion, that was a fallacy. He would, for the purpose of comparison, select two counties of Ireland, one in the south and the other in the north, and nearly equal in size as regarded the number of acres, namely, Limerick and Down. The contrast furnished by these two counties was pregnant with instruction. The number of holdings in Down, of from one to five acres, was 13,753; whilst in Limerick the number was, of holdings of the same extent, 6,841. The number of holdings in Down, of from five to fifteen acres, was 11,991, and the number in Limerick was 6,840. The number of holdings from fifteen to thirty acres in Down was 3,865; in Limerick it was 3,700. The number of holdings above thirty acres in Down was 1,508; in Limerick it was 2,346. Those figures demonstrated that the acknowledged social inferiority of Limerick, as compared with Down, did not arise from the subdivision of land. The returns lately presented to the House relative to the presentments at baronial sessions in the various counties of Ireland, showed that in Limerick presentments had been made to the amount of 186,000*l.*, whilst in Down the presentments had not exceeded 2,917*l.* Nothing could illustrate more forcibly the superior social condition of Down. To what was that attributable? Simply to the land in Down being held under the head landlord, with the security called tenant right. The people there felt perfectly confident that by the custom of the country they could never be dispossessed of their land without ample remuneration for every improvement they had made; and they also felt confident that they never would be dispossessed of it under any circumstances as long as they paid a fair rent; and the landlords of Down did not demand more than a fair rent. That was the happy condition of the county of Down. The landed proprietors of Down did their duty by improving the condition of the people, and giving their tenants a lien upon the land, and that was the cause of the prosperity of that county. By pursuing the same course in other parts of Ireland, they would be rendered equally prosperous. An opinion prevailed generally that it was desirable to do away with small holdings in Ireland; but if those views should be carried into effect, how would the labourer be able to emerge from his original station to a higher place in society? In Down a young man began as a labourer, and having, by industry and prudence, saved money enough to enable him to go upon a farm, he selected one of from five to fifty acres—few farms exceeded the latter number in extent—according to his means, in perfect security that, whatever capital and labour he might expend upon it, would not be lost to himself or his family. The nature of the tenant-right in Downshire was this—the tenant was secure that the landlord could not dispossess him of the land, without paying him the full value of what he might put into it. The tenant had also the power of selling his tenant-right in the event of his finding his landlord a solvent tenant to succeed him. It was not his intention to advocate one class of small holdings which prevailed to a great extent in Ireland—that of cottier tenants under middlemen. Under that system the occupying tenant had no security for his expenditure; the middleman was unable to give security, and the landlord could give none, on account of the middleman standing between him and the occupier. In the present condition of Ireland, the only mode in which the tenant could obtain security, was by passing a law to enable him to obtain the value of labour and capital expended upon the land from the person, be he who he might, who stood over him in the relation of landlord. The enactment of such a law would give the greatest possible impulse to improvement. It would also be necessary to abolish the system of joint-tenancy. It was impossible for the ingenuity of man to devise a system better calculated to impede improvement than that of joint-tenancy. By whom, then, was it contrived? By the landlords. They contrived that system for the very purpose of securing their rents, and giving themselves the least possible trouble. Most of the evils which afflicted Ireland—the want of employment—the absence of all attempts at improvement—might be traced to that unfortunate, and he might say wicked, system, adopted with respect to the letting and management of land in that country. It mattered not what Acts might be passed with respect to Ireland; they would be useless if tenant-right should not be established by law throughout the country. A poor law without it would be unavailing; but establish tenant-right concurrently with the enactment of a poor law, and the two measures would co-operate as a stimulus to improvement, and would prevent the confiscation of property which was now going on. The confiscation of landed property was to be apprehended, not from a poor law, but from the distressed condition of the country, which was the consequence of the present vicious system with respect to the letting of land. The best way to prevent confiscation, was to enable the people to better their condition. Observations were frequently made in that House upon the conduct of absentee landlords; but he must in justice state that the estates of many of the absentee landlords exhibited a greater prosperity than those of a large number of the resident landlords. The evidence given before the Poor Law Commissioners would be found to confirm his statement upon that point. It was not his intention to utter a single word that could be offensive to the present body of Irish landlords. The great majority of them were most humane men, and anxious to discharge their duty. At the same time, he could not but hold them mainly responsible for the present condition of the country. Very recently an Irish proprietor had stated in that House, that rates would not be paid in Ireland. When that declaration reached Ireland, who could tell what effect it might have upon the people? The people might suppose that they would be justified in not paying the rates. He wished to hear the Irish landlords say that they would pay the rates for those who were not able to pay them themselves. He challenged the Irish proprietors to show that he was not justified in casting upon them much responsibility on account of the present condition of the people. He thought they were responsible for the delinquencies of their predecessors, and, as an Irish proprietor, he was willing to take his share of the blame. He hoped that the noble Lord at the head of the Government would give an assurance of his intention to bring in a Bill for the amendment of the law of landlord and tenant in Ireland on the particular points to which he had adverted. On a former occasion he had brought in Bills for effecting that object, and a Bill for the same purpose had been introduced by the late Government. He hoped that the question would not die in the hands of the present Government, but that they would introduce a measure which would really promote the great objects which had been brought under the consideration of the House in the report of the Land Tenure Commission. If such a law were enacted and honestly carried out, it would do more to stimulate employment and improve the condition of the people, than any other measure which Parliament could adopt. The hon. Member concluded by moving—

> "That it appears to this House, from the Reports of various Committees and Commissions, that the system generally adopted in times past in the letting and management of Landed Property in Ireland, has been one of the main causes of the present distressed state of that Country, and the disordered state of its social relations; and that no measures can be effectual in producing a demand for labour, or improving the condition of the people, which shall not include such an amendment of the Laws of Landlord and Tenant as shall give to the improving tenant in occupation a sufficient permanency of tenure, or else establish the tenant's right to claim by law full compensation for all benefits created by the expenditure of his labour and capital on the premises in his occupation."

Sir DENHAM NORREYS, in seconding the Motion, said, he should not touch on the points so ably dwelt upon by his hon. Friend. He must give it as his strong opinion, that all the Government measures would be, if not neutralized, greatly lessened in value, unless the landlords were induced to give leases. In order to induce the landlords to do so, he thought it would be necessary to sever the elective franchise from tenure; because, while the landlords had the power of creating votes, they dreaded their being used against their views. He thought local taxation should be levied exclusively on those landlords who were unwilling to grant leases of twenty or thirty years. He wished, on this point, to state the opinion of a foreigner who had observed the condition of Ireland, and wrote on it as well as any other writer—he meant M. De Beaumont. That intelligent foreigner said to him, some time back, "so long as Ireland is left without leases, every other measure would be comparatively of little value."

Mr. TUITE: Allusion had been made to the protest of Irish proprietors against the extension of out-door relief in Ireland. He did not hesitate to say, that he had signed the document to which he alluded; because, when he saw a large portion of the property of the country not liable to the support of the poor, it was his opinion, that, in common equity, those who were ostensibly landed proprietors should not be made responsible for the whole burden. It was not the Irish landlords who were to be blamed solely for the present state of many parts of that country; for although there were several English landlords possessing property in Ireland, who had acted in the most handsome manner, and had protected their tenantry, it was beyond doubt that they could not be of the same benefit to the poor on their estates as good resident landlords. He was convinced that no measure of this or of any Government could be of advantage to the country till measures had been also taken to make the absentee and neglectful proprietors take that care of their property which society had a right to expect from them, and to make estates held under the Court of Chancery, as well as those belonging to persons living in England or on the Continent, equally responsible. It was owing to absentee landlords, and to their absent or neglectful agents, that the Labour-rate Act and the Government letter had been totally nullified; and he believed that the numerous class of small proprietors, who invested their money in land to make the most of it, were more mischievous than the landlords of great estates.

Viscount CASTLEREAGH wished to call the attention of the House to the operation of the resolutions of his hon. Friend. Representing, as he did, a large and important county, where the system of tenant-right had been fully carried out, and had created the greatest possible confidence between the landlord and tenant, where the greatest improvement was daily going on, and where there was comparative freedom from distress, he was desirous of stating the reasons why he did not support those resolutions. In the first place, he had to observe, that hon. Gentlemen, as he thought, were accustomed to look on Ireland very much as if it were a county, and to consider that the measure which was applicable to a part must be applicable to the whole of Ireland. It was, however, impossible that any system of laws could take effect which was applied to the whole country. An Irishman, to hear them speak, would fancy they looked on him as the denizen of a mere province or of a shire, instead of being the inhabitant of this empire. If hon. Members went more to Ireland, they would easily see how much various parts of it differed. He was sure, then, if those resolutions were carried out, they would prove a very great affliction to the landlords in the south. In the north the system of tenant-right existed already, and there he could bear testimony to the success of it. But he would prefer seeing it introduced in other parts by the gradual exertions of the landlords, rather than by a resolution of the House; and he was afraid he could not support any proposition to make the system imperative by law on landlords differently situated from those in the north of Ireland.

Colonel CONOLLY agreed with the noble Lord in his opinion, that it would not be desirable to make the system universal by legal enactment; and objecting as he did to general resolutions, which did not possess the force of law, but had sufficient influence, as the opinion of the House, to disturb the present order of things, and to excite hopes which could not be easily gratified, he was bound to oppose the resolutions of the hon. Member for Rochdale, whilst he gave him every credit for the best intentions, and for his knowledge of the subject. The course adopted by the noble Viscount who had just spoken, and the noble Viscount's father, on their estates, had been, he believed, to recognise tenant-right only in those tenants who had made considerable improvements in the land; and considering it merely as the custom of the country, he should deprecate more than language could describe, the idea of its being made the law of the land. The great use of it seemed to consist in the effect it had in bringing about a good understanding between the landlord and the tenant, as to the improvement of the land; but as he was satisfied the intervention of the law would be pernicious to the tenant, and destructive to the landlord, he would resist the present resolution.

Mr. LABOUCHERE said, he would detain the House for a very few moments; and if he did not enter at large into the subject brought forward by the hon. Member for Rochdale, he trusted the hon. Member would not attribute it to any insensibility on his part to the great importance of the question, or to any disrespect to him, who was, he admitted, a most excellent Irish landlord, and who had devoted so much time and pains to this subject, as fully to entitle him to the attention of the House. The hon. Member had on a former occasion submitted his views to the House on this very question in the form of a Bill; and if he had taken the same course on the present occasion, he certainly should have made no objection on the part of the Government, without of course pledging it to the principle, to have had the Bill laid on the Table; on the contrary, he should have been glad if the views of the hon. Member had been brought forward in the shape of a Bill. He could not, however, help suspecting that if the hon. Member had altered his course, he had been deterred from pursuing it by the difficulties which surrounded it, and had brought forward those general resolutions instead. He entirely agreed with the hon. Member for Donegal in disliking abstract and general resolutions; and he thought this particular subject and the present state of Ireland peculiarly unfitted for them. He would just observe on the very vague words and general expressions of the resolution. In the first place, it did not point out any distinct plan; it put two alternatives. The hon. Member called on the House of Commons to assert that it was right to take one of two courses—either to give to the improving tenant in occupation a sufficient permanency of tenure, or else to establish the tenant's right to claim by law full compensation for all benefits created on the land by his expenditure of labour or capital. Now these were two very distinct things—and it was very objectionable for the House to state its concurrence in them, without stating also which of these courses it would prefer. Again, the words in themselves were vague and uncertain. The hon. Member made use of the phrase, "sufficient permanency of tenure." What vague words these were, and what very different ideas would be attached to them in different parts of Ireland with respect to the intentions of the House! For this reason alone he objected to dealing with a question of such importance in this manner. As to the question itself, he readily admitted that it required the most deliberate care and attention of the House. His noble Friend at the head of the Government had already stated that it was the intention of

Government to prepare a measure for the improvement of the relations between landlord and tenant in Ireland at a period of the Session sufficiently early to enable the House to consider it in the fullest and most careful manner. He thought, therefore, it would not be right to state his opinions on the subject on the present occasion. All he should say was, that if the House interfered with the question—and its interference might certainly be exercised in the present condition of Ireland—they must take special care to do nothing to shake those rights of property which in Ireland, as in every other country, were the cornerstone of civilization and improvement; but he believed it might be right and practicable to interfere in a way which would place the condition of the tenantry in Ireland in a more secure state with respect to their landlords than they were at present. He agreed with the hon. Member for Rochdale in thinking that if they could do so, they would accomplish an object of the utmost importance. He thought a well-timed and carefully-devised Bill on this subject, would be a fit and suitable accompaniment to the other measures which had been laid before the House, and had received or were about to receive their attention. With these views, he did not think it necessary to trouble the House with any further remarks, except to state that when the Government measure was before the House, he would explain his views at greater length; and he would conclude by moving the previous question.

Mr. F. FRENCH seconded the Motion of the right hon. Gentleman. In the west of Ireland, it was usual to allow the tenant, for improvements in draining and fencing, by a proportionate abatement of the rent; but with respect to tenant-right itself, he considered it had been most mischievous and unfair to the landlords, and still more so to the tenants themselves. The incoming tenant paid so much for the present interest in the farm, that he was left without money, and consequently could not till the land properly, and thus the landlord got a bad tenant, while the sum paid on entering the land was so great—amounting sometimes to twenty years' purchase—that it ought to buy the fee-simple of the land.

Mr. SMITH O'BRIEN did not think it necessary to offer any observations to the House, as public opinion in Ireland was unanimous in favour of tenant-right. His object in rising was to ask the Government, if they had a measure on the subject in view, when it would be placed on the Table of the House? The people of Ireland would not consider any legislation complete without it.

Mr. LABOUCHERE replied that it was impossible to state the exact time, as that must depend on circumstances, when there were so many matters to be got through that Session; but he hoped to be able to lay it on the Table before Easter.

Mr. S. CRAWFORD spoke in reply, and explained that the reason why he had adopted the form of a resolution on the present occasion, in preference to a Bill was, that the noble Lord at the head of the Government had led him to believe that a Bill on the subject would be introduced early in the Session. That had not been done, and he had observed much disappointment in Ireland in consequence. The same promise had been repeated; but as they had an uncertain prospect of the time of its performance, he would on a future day ask leave to introduce a Bill on the subject. Seeing the opinion of the House, he would not press his resolution, and would ask leave to withdraw it.

Resolution withdrawn.

COMMONS INCLOSURE.

Mr. AGLIONBY then moved for leave to bring in a Bill further to amend the Acts to facilitate the Inclosure and Improvement of Commons, by providing that all waste or common lands, allotted by virtue of these Acts, shall be held as freehold, and shall be allotted as such, without reference to the tenure of the ancient lands in respect of which such allotments shall be made. The Commons Inclosure Act, 8 and 9 Vict., cap. 118, gave power to inclose common land, and convert it into freehold allotments; but in the northern parts of England, that statute was comparatively inoperative, under the terms of the 94th section, in consequence of the nature of the tenure in these districts. The Act rendered the expense of a private Bill unnecessary, and saved the difference between 15*l.* and 600*l.* to the applicants in all other parts of the country; but the 94th clause prevented its application to the north of England. To amend that clause was the object of his Bill. At present commons inclosure commissioners were precluded from exercising any control over the agreements between the landlords and the allottees in copyhold tenures; it was to remedy this that he brought in the measure. He did not desire to defraud the landlord of a single right; and he therefore proposed that the commissioners should have the discretionary power of awarding due compensation upon the conversion of copyhold into freehold allotments, in commonage inclosures.

Leave given.

PAYMENT OF RATES (IRELAND).

MR. S. CRAWFORD moved for leave to bring in a Bill for better securing the payment of Irish rates. He wished to secure the payment of the rates now payable, according to law, by tenant and landlord. He proposed they should be levied on the landlord's rents, as the rates now were, according to the 6 and 7 Vic., which made the landlord liable for the rates of a certain class of tenantry, and that in case of any rates of absentees or others not being paid, there should be power vested in the Courts of Chancery or Exchequer to appoint receivers on the estates till the rates were paid.

Leave given.

CAPTAIN WYNN.

MR. C. O'BRIEN, in making the Motion of which he had given notice, for the production of certain papers, begged to say that his object was to ascertain the nature and the purport of the communication made to the Board of Works by Mr. Inspector Wynn, and to have an inquiry instituted into the truth or falsehood of the statements he had seen fit to transmit to that department respecting the conduct of his hon. Colleague and himself (Mr. C. O'Brien). He also wanted to have it explained why it was that a report made by that person to the Board of Works, in obedience to a letter dated the 4th of December, 1846, and addressed to him from that office, had been suppressed; and by whose authority, or with whose connivance, this most unfair proceeding was allowed to take place. He thought that it was essential that this inquiry should be instituted, not alone for the sake of his hon. Friend and himself, who had been charged most wantonly, most falsely, and most maliciously, by a public functionary, with a crime at the contemplation of which humanity shuddered, but for the sake of the honour and dignity of the House of Commons; for the satisfaction of the public whom they represented; and for the purification, if it might be, and efficiency of the Board of Works. That board was entrusted with vast powers and large discretion; and it would be fatal to its utility that it should lose the confidence, or even be compromised in the opinion of the people, as it certainly would be if it should appear that it had in the smallest degree abetted or countenanced, or sought to shield a subordinate who had the audacity to accuse his Friend and himself of so base a crime as suggesting the assassination of even the most insignificant of human beings that ever crawled on the earth. He felt it the more necessary to press for this inquiry from the circumstance—and a circumstance it was which had much astonished himself and many other Members of the House—of two Ministers of the Crown having seen fit to step out of their way to heap praises upon one who had been guilty of making a false and libellous statement, for which, if he had made it openly, he might have been signally punished by the law of the land; but which that person never would have dared to make at all, if he had not flattered himself with the belief either that his letter would have been suppressed, or that he would have been sheltered from the consequences of his calumny. The hon. Gentleman then moved for the production of the following papers:—

> "Copy of a letter dated December 4, 1846, from the Board of Works, addressed to Captain Wynn, directing an investigation of charges contained in the annexed letter from George Westropp to the said board, imputing partiality and misconduct to the Liscannor Relief Committee;"

and a variety of other returns.

The CHANCELLOR OF THE EXCHEQUER had not the least objection to the production of those papers, as far as he was concerned, with one exception. There would be much difficulty in making out the return with respect to the men struck off the works, their names, and places of abode. As he was informed, 9,700 men had been struck off, and it would form rather a long list to give all the particulars the hon. Member desired in each case. In assenting to those returns, he had to repeat what he stated on a former occasion, that he had directed the Board of Works to be informed that if there were any papers which they thought necessary to be laid before the House in reference to this case, he would move for their production.

MR. C. O'BRIEN thought the return to which the right hon. Gentleman objected, most essential. It could be proved that the charge against him and his Colleague of instigating the people to assassinate Captain Wynn, was an utter falsehood, as several most respectable persons were ready to come forward who could prove that there was not the slightest danger to Captain Wynn, or to the officer of the Board of Works. The reason why he had incurred that gentleman's malignity was, because he wished to carry out the letter of the Irish Government at the presentment sessions which Captain Wynn attended. It had been proposed at the sessions to apply certain sums to public works, under the letter; but Captain Wynn objected to it, and the Board of Works refused to ratify them. Captain Wynn had been personal to him on that occasion, and was forced to make an apology for his conduct. It was strange to him that the Board of Works should have put on the records of that House a letter which would have been a fit subject for the Court of Queen's Bench; and he thought it should not have been placed on the books of the House.

Mr. LABOUCHERE sincerely regretted that any question of a personal nature should have been mixed up in a discussion, which was of itself sufficiently unpleasant. But after what had fallen from the hon. Member, he felt bound to say a word or two to the House; and first he would refer to the circumstance of the Board of Works having refused to sanction some presentments made by the sessions at Corofin, under what what was called Mr. Labouchere's letter. He would just state that the nature of the works which the hon. Member proposed, was to employ the people in the ordinary cultivation of their farms, or of their landlords' fields, without giving any security to the Government for repayment. He had no hesitation in saying that if the Board or the Government had sanctioned such a presentment, they would have deserved the greatest censure. He would not, however, argue that point with the hon. Gentleman now, but would observe, that the letter in question was not the law of the land, but in effect the exertion of a discretionary power by the Lord Lieutenant, beyond the law; and in acting upon the letter, they were bound to proceed with the greatest caution. This would give the House some notion of the difficulties under which they were placed in administering the law when presentments came up for great sums, and they had only the alternative of sanctioning them for the purpose of relieving destitution and giving employment, or knowing that the people must starve. With respect to the conduct of Captain Wynn, he had stated when the matter was before the House some nights ago, that having heard the conduct of that public servant openly attacked, he thought he should be wanting in his duty if he did not declare that, to the best of his belief, and the belief of those who had opportunities of observing his conduct—he meant the officers of the Board of Works—that in the discharge of his duty in that country Captain Wynn had set an example of earnestness and perseverance, grappling with difficulties almost unheard of, that entitled him to the confidence of the House and the country. He thought that no Government which did not defend its servants could expect to be well served, or to have the attachment of those who served it; and no consideration, whilst he had the honour of holding an office under the Crown, or a seat in that House, should prevent him from defending a public servant when he was attacked, whether that attack came from political friend or foe. It was a duty to the public servants and to the Crown, and to the best of his abilities he would always discharge it. With respect to the complaint made as to the appearance of certain letters in the blue book, containing statements which had been controverted, and had given offence, it was impossible to prevent papers laid on the Table from containing statements of this kind; and with matters of public concernment personal transactions naturally became mixed up. Government would afford to the utmost of their power all the information that was calculated to throw light on these transactions; every paper that might be moved for for that purpose should be cheerfully given by the Government. He might repeat his regret that any discussions of a personal nature had found their way into the deliberations of the House on those subjects; but he must, at the same time, say that he thought it his duty to defend Captain Wynn from any general charge of not having performed his duty most faithfully and ably in Clare. He would read a single sentence from a letter by Captain Gamble, which would show the good that had been effected by the steps taken at his instance:—

> "By the revision of the committee lists required by Captain Wynn, the numbers were greatly reduced—in one parish from 1,200 to 700."

Captain Gamble further stated—

> "Every one, almost without exception, high and low, throws himself helplessly on the Government, demanding present support, and provision for the future, in tilling the land and supplying seed."

He did not know whether Captain Wynn was, in any instance hurried beyond the calmness and temper with which it was always desirable that public duties should be performed; but he would venture to say that, placed in the most trying circumstances, he believed no public servant ever more honestly or faithfully discharged his duty.

Mr. M. J. O'CONNELL recommended that the latter part of the returns, calling for a list of men employed on the public works in Clare, and struck off by Captain Wynn, should not be pressed, as a list containing 7,000 or 8,000 names would take three months to prepare.

Mr. BERNAL OSBORNE thought, that as the hon. Member for Clare had been charged with inciting a mob to assassination, every opportunity ought to be accorded to him to disprove the accusation. If he were guilty of such conduct, he was unfit to hold a seat in that House, or in any other house. If, on the other hand, Captain Wynn was unable to prove the charge, he was an unfit person to be employed by the Government. The matter could not stop there; the House was bound to accede to the production of the returns required by the hon. Member. The hon. Member was in a critical position, and his explanation now or at a future time ought to be listened to.

Returns ordered.

RAILWAYS.

Mr. STRUTT, in moving for leave to bring in a Bill for regulating the proceedings of the Commissioners of Railways, and for amending the law relating to railways, said, it would be in the recollection of the House, that, towards the close of last Session of Parliament, a Bill was prepared, and on the recommendation of a Committee, passed that House with general acquiescence, for the purpose of constituting a new Board for the superintendence of railways. By that Bill, the powers formerly possessed by the Railway Department of the Board of Trade were transferred to new Commissioners; but it was understood that early in the present Session Her Majesty's Government would be prepared with a measure to regulate the proceedings of the Commissioners, and to make new regulations concerning the management and law of railways. In accordance with that understanding, he was now prepared shortly to state the substance of the measure which Her Majesty's Government intended to propose to Parliament. He would not trespass on the attention of the House by going into any preliminary matter as to the necessity or expediency of further legislation on railways, because he conceived that to be admitted with general acquiescence by the passing of the Bill of last Session. But what he had to propose might naturally be divided into two parts: first, that which related to proceedings preliminary to bringing in Bills into that House; and second, that which related to the regulation of railways which had actually received the sanction of the Legislature. He ought first to state that he did not intend to carry the plan wholly into effect by a Bill only, but partly by a Bill, and partly by alterations in the Standing Orders. He proposed that wherever new duties were imposed on the Commissioners of Railways, they should be mentioned in the Bill; but whenever the functions of that or the other House of Parliament were interfered with, that should take place, not under the Bill, but under the Standing Orders of either House. He thought that desirable, because by this means they would not part with any portion of their jurisdiction, but each House would regulate its own proceedings by its Standing Orders; and if it should see fit in future to repeal any part of this measure, it might resume the power formerly bestowed. He thought it most convenient that he should proceed by order of time; and, first, was the survey made by the railway company themselves preparatory to bringing in the Bill. And here he must refer to an anomaly which had often excited observation. Before a Bill could be brought into the House, they required certain plans and sections to be deposited, which could only be made by means of an entry on the land; and yet they gave to the parties whom they required to make this service, no right of entry for this purpose. This could not be done at present, in case of opposition on the part of the landlord or occupier, without a violation of the law. So long as no particular evil arose from this state of things, it might perhaps not receive the attention of the Legislature; but they knew that latterly evils had arisen, and conflicts had ensued, which had afterwards in certain cases been brought to adjudication before courts of law. He thought therefore, under these circumstances, it would not be right, in proposing a measure for the regulation of railways, to omit some remedy for this state of things by course of law. One difficulty connected with the question arose upon the point of entering upon lands. If the power of entering upon lands was to be facilitated, it was necessary to give a cheap and easy method of recovering for any damages that might be sustained by such entry; for if the promoters of a railway were to be empowered to enter, it was manifestly unjust to drive the landowner to the trouble and expense of the ordinary course provided by law for the recovery of damages. With a view of meeting this difficulty, it was proposed that before the promoters of a railway should be authorized to enter upon any lands, they should apply to the Commissioners of Railways, and deposit with them such a sum as in the opinion of the Commissioners should be sufficient for the purpose of giving compensation for any damages that might arise; that on depositing this sum, they should obtain the warrant of the Commissioners to enter upon the lands; that after such entry the proprietor should be entitled to full compensation for damage; and should the promoters refuse to grant it, he should apply to the Commissioners, who should have power to award him such compensation as he was fairly entitled to. The next part of the proposal was also an alteration in the present system. In many cases much difficulty had been experienced by many persons through whose lands railways were intended to pass, in ascertaining how their interests and property were likely to be affected. It had been his duty, as chairman of the Committee on Standing Orders, to examine farmers and other persons connected with agriculture—the class most affected by these measures—and he had found among them a difficulty of understanding these plans and sections. Now it was most desirable that these persons should be clearly informed of the exact course of the line, and it was therefore proposed that after the completion of the survey, the promoters of a Bill should mark out the proposed line, either by a narrow furrow, or by stakes, also placing posts at convenient distances on which they would have to inscribe the number of feet or inches above or below the surface of the ground, so as to afford to every party interested clear and distinct information of the course and level of the line. By this means information of the most valuable kind would be afforded to that class of whom he had been speaking, which they were now totally incapable of obtaining. He would now pass to another part of the subject, in which the hon. Member for Montrose had taken great interest, and which arose out of the recommendation of a Committee over which the hon. Member presided during the last Session—he meant the propriety of instituting local inquiry previous to the introduction of a Bill into Parliament. Hon. Members might have observed the injury that had often accrued to proprietors, as well as expense to railway companies, from the fact, that in ordinary cases the landowner, not being aware of the exact course to be taken by the railway, had no opportunity of suggesting any improvement or alteration until the plans and sections had been deposited. It often happened that a landed proprietor, upon seeing that the course of a proposed railway would be inconvenient or injurious to him, went to the promoters, and representing this inconvenience, showed at the same time that another route through adjoining lands, while it would be much less injurious to him, would be equal, if not superior, as regarded the interests of the company, to that which they had selected. The answer of the company, in such cases, had often been, "We should really have been glad to know this before; but it is now too late. We have deposited our plans and sections, and we are required by the Standing Orders to bring in our plan in exact conformity with those plans, so that, unless we abandon our Bill altogether, it is impossible for us to attend to the suggestion." What then was the position of the landowner? Either he must rest contented with the injury his property would receive, or he must carry on an opposition to the Bill at great expense both to himself and the company. And what was the position of the Committee on the Bill? They were obliged either to put off a measure they believed to be generally good, or, by passing it, to inflict injustice on an individual. For the purpose of removing this evil, he proposed that the Commissioners, on receiving information of such cases, or on application after the marking out of the line in the manner suggested, should be empowered to send a competent officer to the spot to make a local inspection of the line; that this officer should, wherever the Commissioners might think it desirable, by public advertisement or otherwise, give notice of the times at which he would attend at different parts of the line, for the purpose of receiving any suggestions which might be offered; that on these being communicated to him and the promoters of the line, if the promoters should choose to adopt them, the Commissioners might authorize the promoters of the Bill to adopt such variations, and include them in their line. If, on the other hand, the promoters should decline to adopt these variations; and if the party should still remain anxious to press them, and to submit them to the Commissioners and the Legislature, it was proposed that the Commissioners should have the power to authorize these persons to deposit plans and sections of such variations, to make the necessary application to the landowners, and bring them before the Committee, so that the Committee might form a fair judgment whether they ought to be adopted, or whether the line ought to be constructed according to the original plan. He considered this a cheap and easy mode of proceeding, and hoped, not only that much expense and inconvenience might be saved to the landowners, but also that a considerable portion of the expense now incurred before the Committees of the House might also be spared. Supposing the line to be adopted, the next point would be to deposit the plans and sections in conformity with the Standing Orders. It was well known that a change had recently taken place in this respect. Those inquiries as to the compliance with the Standing Orders, which had been formerly taken before Committees of the House, had now, for the first time, been removed from the sub-committees, and two Gentlemen had been appointed examiners, in which capacity, he believed, they had discharged their duty with satisfaction to all the parties concerned. In future Sessions, he thought it would be desirable, so far as related to Railway Bills, that these duties should be discharged by the Commissioners, or by officers under their supervision. Previous information on engineering points might be of great advantage in investigating questions connected with the Standing Orders. These examinations had always been in some degree imperfect, because the only mode of testing how far the Standing Orders might have been complied with, so far as respected the engineering part of the measure, depended almost exclusively upon the objections of those parties who were opposed to it; and, therefore, supposing no opponents should present themselves, or that the opposition should be withdrawn — although hon. Members might be aware that, in numerous cases, the Standing Orders had not been complied with, still they had no opportunity of obtaining evidence on the subject. Now, when a person had been employed in examining thoroughly into the engineering portion of the line, the information thus obtained might also be brought to bear on that part of the subject. Without supposing that frivolous objections would be taken, it would still be in his power to ascertain that no substantial error existed with reference to the Standing Orders. Having now come to the point where the Standing Orders were proved, the next question would be, as to the Bill being submitted to the House. It was one part of the recommendation of the Committee on Railways last Session, that the Commissioners should report to both Houses of Parliament upon the merits of the different railway measures which might be proposed during the Session; and this part of the recommendation, of course, would be adopted. For that purpose it would be necessary, not only to possess engineers and persons competent to examine thoroughly into the plans and sections, but also to have power to enter upon the land and examine upon the spot all engineering questions relating to the line. There would also be a regulation requiring the Commissioners, or their officers, to hear those persons who might have objections to urge against the line of railway. It was proposed to hear those objections in such a manner as the Commissioners might appoint, so as to give a fair hearing to both parties in the case. It might be asked whether or not the Commissioners proposed to hear counsel. He certainly thought that would be a very unwise course, because it would be like hearing them twice over — once before the Commissioners, and a second time before the Committee—it would prolong the proceedings to so great an extent, that it would scarcely be possible for the Commissioners to get through their business; and, he thought, the business would be decided in a more satisfactory manner by taking a shorter and much cheaper course. Supposing the question to be an engineering one, a competent and disinterested engineer might be appointed to inquire into it, and have the two opposing engineers before him at the same time; and he (Mr. Strutt) laid great stress on this point, because it was desirable that no private information should be given either to the Commissioners or their officers. By authorizing the engineer so appointed to go into the engineering points connected with the line, giving him the power of calling additional witnesses, or sending a qualified person to make an inspection on the spot, they would be able to come to a fair decision on the question infinitely sooner, and much more cheaply, than by employing the expensive machinery of counsel. And with respect to various other points, they might be examined in a similar manner without the employment of counsel. After hearing the parties, it was proposed that the Commissioners should report to both Houses of Parliament, giving the fullest information on all the points on which Committees were now required to report, such as the engineering details, the amount of tolls, the amount of capital, &c. He thought these reports would be found to be of great benefit in preparing the matter for the consideration of the Committee, in shortening their proceedings, and in providing them with disinterested evidence on which to ground their decisions. Another important point was the degree of authority which should be given to the reports of the Commissioners. For reasons which he had already stated, he proposed that authority should be given to these reports, not by Bill, but by the Standing Orders of the House. The duty of reporting, he proposed, should be regulated by the Bill, but the degree of authority by the Standing Orders of the House itself. It appeared to him desirable, that on all matters of engineering, the report of the Commissioners should be *primâ facie* conclusive; and for this reason, the Commissioners would have better opportunities than the Committee of forming a correct opinion of the engineering merits of a line; and he believed, that by making their report on this point *primâ facie* conclusive, the Committee, and the parties to a Bill, would be relieved of great trouble and expense. He used the words *primâ facie* conclusive, because it would, no doubt, be sometimes necessary that the Committee should have additional information besides that conveyed to them by the reports. However full those reports, it might happen that points arose on which the Committee would require further elucidation; and, in that case, the Bill authorized them to report specially to the House, who would make an order for the additional information required. There was yet another contingency to be provided for. It might be possible, in some cases, that, notwithstanding every care, a serious error of fact might exist in the report of the Commissioners; and, in such a case, it would be obviously unfair that the parties should suffer. It was, therefore, provided by the Bill, that if either party complained of a serious error, in a matter of fact, existing in the report of the Commissioners, they might apply to the Committee to refer back the report to the Commissioners for reconsideration; but with this proviso, that if the Committee should see no reason for the reconsideration, the party so applying should be liable to costs. This proviso was for the purpose of preventing frivolous and vexatious objections. Another point of importance was that of fixing the fares and tolls to be adopted in Bills. He had often heard members of Committees complain of the difficult position in which they had been placed in this respect. With respect to engineering and other parts of the Bill, there were mostly two parties before them; and, after the long proceedings that took place, the speeches of counsel, and the examination of witnesses, justice might be done in the case; but in regard to tolls and fares, there were seldom two parties present, but those who promoted the proceedings were all interested one way, and there was no one representing the interests of the public. The Committee had no evidence as to tolls and fares in different parts of the country: they had, in fact, no data whereon to arrive at a fair decision on the point; and he had been told that in many cases Committees had done little more than adopt the tables placed before them. Now, it appeared to him that a report from a body having full information upon all these points —having before them the tolls and fares of all railways in the kingdom—knowing the practical effect of the rise and reduction of fares upon different lines, both upon the public and upon railway companies themselves—would render essential service in aiding the Committee to come to a fair conclusion. He came now to other points of importance, which were interesting to many hon. Gentlemen, and regarding which it appeared to him that similar advantages might be derived by the Committee from the reports of the commissioners—he alluded to the clauses in Railway Bills relating to the raising capital, the borrowing money, and the amalgamation of lines. The right hon. Member for Coventry was interested in this part of the subject, as he had been the chairman of a Committee last

Session in which important questions of the kind had been raised. There had been a case in which a railway company had purchased another line, and had paid a sum amounting to 150 per cent beyond the original value of the stock; and the Committee had referred the subject to the House, expressing the opinion that some general regulation should be laid down. These were subjects which he thought might very properly occupy the attention of the Railway Board, and upon which, as the different Bills came before them, they might be able to afford very valuable information to the Committees, and offer opinions deserving consideration. By these regulations, an important amendment might be effected in regard to the cheapness of the mode in which the proceedings were conducted before the House. One point which had been urged upon him by gentlemen connected with railways, and by other persons, was this—that the Railway Board ought to retain under this Bill a veto upon all Bills submitted to Parliament. He owned, however, that he could not agree to that proposal. Suppose the Board possessed this veto, and suppose they used it, as very likely they would, only very sparingly, as, in the case of Bills obviously useless or improper, it appeared to him that the veto would be of little practical use, because the fate of those Bills would be shortly determined in another way, and very likely the opinion of the Commissioners themselves would put an end to them. But suppose the Commissioners used their veto very freely, and in the case of competing lines, were to give the preference to certain Bills over others, thus assuming the functions of Parliament, he doubted very much, looking to the feeling which existed in the country upon such matters, whether it would tolerate a board constituted with such enormous power as to say, in regard to two competing lines, this only shall pass, and the other shall not be allowed to be submitted for the consideration of Parliament. There was another question of great importance which had been urged upon him for consideration, as to whether powers should be granted to the railway companies in perpetuity, or only for a term of years. The latter practice had prevailed in other countries, especially in France; and a great deal of evidence on the subject had been taken before the Committee on Railways last Session. It should be remembered that French railways were altogether on a different footing to those of England. In France, the lines were selected by the Government, and a large part of the works were executed by the Government; so that in that country the railway companies might be considered in the position of occupying tenants, while in England they were in fact proprietors of the lines. Nevertheless, if the House were now, for the first time, commencing railway legislation, he thought it would be a matter deserving most serious consideration, whether or not some restriction of this kind should be imposed; but at present the case stood in a wholly different position. Nearly all the great lines of the country had already been granted on the terms of belonging to the companies in perpetuity, and not on lease for a term; and the question now was, whether in the case of proposed railways, and which were generally in connexion with existing lines, any sufficient advantage would be derived by granting those branches for terms of years only, while the great trunk lines remained grants in perpetuity. If a course of that kind were taken, it would not only excite considerable jealousy, but would also tend to limit the means the Legislature had of interfering generally in other ways. These measures of limitation would be brought forward by the railway companies as an argument against any other check which the House might seek to impose upon them; and he very much doubted whether, by so doing, the House would not be sacrificing greater and more important objects, for the attainment of a remote and uncertain benefit. For these reasons, no such proposal of limitation was made in the Bill. Another point which had been raised was, how far it would be desirable in new Bills to limit the rate of interest obtained by railway companies. It appeared to him that if a restriction of this kind were imposed, it would, instead of giving an interest to the company in economy and good management, give them an interest in waste and bad management. He thought that in attempting to regulate the rate of interest, they should be beginning at the wrong end; and that the more proper course was to adopt a judicious system with respect to fares and tolls. It was for the Legislature to exercise a wise and judicious control over railway companies, and to take care that the public should be fairly served, and at fair prices. If the Legislature could put reasonable restrictions of that kind on railway companies, and could introduce a system, the effect of which would be to guarantee to the public the advantage of moderate fares and tolls, it certainly did appear to him, that, this great object once gained, it was of very little importance to Parliament what amount of profit the companies might realize. If they could succeed in making their railways profitable, it was no evil to the public, and would, of course, be the source of much advantage to themselves. He had already explained the means he had proposed to adopt for determining the question of fares and tolls, so far as new and already existing companies were concerned; and it was therefore unnecessary to dwell now at any great length on the point; but he would observe that there was an addition which he proposed to make to the system. He considered that it was only fair and equitable that in the case of future railways the rate of fares and tolls should be limited by Parliament for a term of years. It was exceedingly difficult to estimate (and especially so in railway matters) what the future course of improvement might be, and to what great results it might conduce. Fares and tolls which were very reasonable and proper to-day, might not be at all so after the lapse of a number of years; and the interests of the public might be injuriously affected if a final and arbitrary rule were to be applied to a state of things which was essentially liable to change. Bearing these facts in mind, it appeared to him that Parliament, in granting such powers for the future, should take care to limit them to a certain stated period. Ten years was the period which he was inclined to advocate. But here he would take leave to say that he was most anxious not to be misunderstood upon this question. He did not mean that at the end of that period the property of those companies was to be thrown open, and that Parliament was to be at liberty to introduce any limitation of fares and tolls that it might think proper, without regard to the interests of the company; but he certainly did think that it was highly essential to the interests of the public, that at the end of a term of ten years the fares and tolls should be submitted to a revision, to be conducted on a principle similar to that upon which the scale had been in the first instance appointed. What he advocated was, that the requirements and interests of all parties concerned having been taken carefully into consideration, and it having been ascertained what fares and tolls other railway companies had exacted with advantage alike to themselves and the public, that all those facts having been clearly brought before them, Parliament should at the end of ten years address itself to the consideration of the question, what would be a fair provision to be made under the altered circumstances of the cases. Heretofore he had only spoken of the fares and tolls of new railways; but now the question suggested itself whether it was advisable that any revision should take place with respect to the existing lines. This consideration was the more urgent, because many Bills had been passed in the course of the last two Sessions, which contained clauses rendering the companies in whose favour they were enacted, subject to the future revision of Parliament upon this subject. That was one class of Acts. There was another class of Acts which did not render the companies who obtained them liable to any such revision. But then it should be borne in mind, that whenever those companies applied for new powers, it would of course be in the power of Parliament, in granting the powers so required, to make such conditions and stipulations as might appear to them best calculated to promote the welfare of the community. This right was exercised most beneficially for all parties at the instance of the right hon. Baronet the Member for Tamworth in the case of the cheap trains. The right hon. Baronet, whose suggestion had been productive of great good, not only to the public but to the companies themselves, proposed that whenever a railway company came to Parliament seeking for a Bill or demanding new powers, they should only receive the Bill or the new powers on the express condition of rendering themselves liable to the cheap-train regulation. He did not mean to contend that those companies which, by their Acts, were not liable to revision, should be placed upon the same footing with companies which were so liable; but this he would say, that when the former class of companies came to that House seeking for more powers — whether for amalgamation, extension, or any other purpose—the granting of their request should be made provisional on their compliance with such conditions as Parliament, in its solicitude for the welfare of the public, might think proper to impose. The course, therefore, which he was prepared to recommend was, that it should be made a provision of the Bill which he proposed to introduce, that when the Commissioners should have reported on any new railway with respect to its fares and tolls, they should not only recommend what scale should be adopted in this Bill, but, referring to the maximum scale of fares and tolls which they might find in any other Act of Parliament then existing, affecting the company in question, should also give their opinion as to the necessity of revising that scale. Where the right of revision was specially reserved in the original Act of a company, it was of course the same as a new Bill; but in cases where such special powers had not been reserved, it would then be a matter of consideration, taking into account the extent of the new powers demanded, and the evil, if any, which had resulted to the public from too high a rate of fares—whether for the Commissioners to report, and for Parliament to decide, how far it might be wise and expedient to institute a revision with respect to Acts belonging to that class. In all cases a limitation of time would be necessary, for it would be impossible for Parliament to make a regulation for all future time, having no grounds on which to form a conclusion, but the state of things at the present moment. There was another point connected with this question of fares and tolls, which would be included in the Bill, namely, that the fares upon any railway should not be altered without due notice of the fact being given to the Commissioners and the public. He had heard of serious complaints in consequence of non-compliance with this practice. He had heard of a case where a railway company suddenly raised their fares without giving notice to the public, and great inconvenience had been the consequence, for persons applied for tickets at the office with the old rate of charge in their hands; and in cases where the applicants were poor, or did not happen to have more money about them at the time, the annoyance endured was very serious indeed, for they were unable to proceed upon their journey. This was not at all fair. He did not think it at all right that any change should be made, without duly notifying to the public the company's intention in that respect. He would propose that notice should be given both to the public and the Commissioners. It would be optional with the company to state their reasons for making the alteration. They might, if they liked, assign their reasons; and the advantage of their doing so would be that they would be supplying with useful and interesting information the Commissioners, whose duty it would be to make an annual report to Parliament upon the state of the fares and tolls throughout the year, setting forth the inequalities and irregularities which had taken place, and their causes—calling attention to the cases (if any) where the public had been aggrieved, and, if necessary, making suggestions for additional accommodation, and a more strict regard to public convenience, by the granting of new lines or otherwise. Ample security should be taken for the due accommodation of the public, and it ought to be done in a manner of which no man should have reason to complain. He had no intention whatever to cast the slightest reflection on the great railway interests of this country. He was well aware that many of the railway companies had shown by their conduct that they were themselves satisfied that their own interests were identical with those of the public, and that if they desired to promote the success of the great works in which they were engaged, they could only hope to do it effectually by increasing their traffic, and giving greater accommodation to the public. Of this fact he was fully conscious; and although he considered that the regulations he was proposing were necessary, he felt confident that in many cases the wishes of the Commissioners and of Parliament would be anticipated by the companies themselves. He hoped and believed it would be so; but the fact of its being very generally supposed that this anticipation would be realized in many instances, did not render it less necessary that the Legislature should endeavour to procure some better security for a due and continuous regard to the welfare of the public, than was to be found in the expectation that all railway companies would take an enlightened view of their own interests. Government would not do its duty unless it proposed to undertake some such control as he described. It was necessary, not only for the public, but for the railway companies themselves. Suppose a case where four different companies had in their joint hands a very important line of communication. Three of them might take an enlightened view of their interests, and concur that the rates of fares should be reduced. If, however, the fourth company stood aloof, and were to refuse its assent to any such proposition, was it not manifest that not only the public, but the three companies whose opinions coincided, would have grievous cause of complaint? In fact, the three companies who were for adopting a liberal and enlightened policy, would be robbed by the single recusant. He was justified, therefore, in making the assertion that it was not only for the interest of the public at large, but also for that of the railway companies themselves, that some such system of supervision and restriction as he was now advocating, should be enforced. He now came to a question of inferior importance, but still of sufficient consequence to justify the application of the attention of the House to it; he alluded to the charges which were made by companies on account of services rendered to the Post Office establishment. He was sorry that greater precaution had not been taken at an earlier period in reference to this matter, with a view to securing the interest of the public. He was sorry that more extensive powers had not been reserved by the public for the transmission of the mails; for the arrangements which at present existed, were defective and unmethodical. The mode in which the charges of the companies were now regulated was this: when the Post Office authorities wanted certain services to be rendered, they applied to the company, and the rate of remuneration was settled by arbitration. Now, this certainly appeared to him an exceptionable mode of proceeding. It was an unsatisfactory and unbusiness-like system. Some clear and definite terms of remuneration ought to be specified. He was informed by the authorities of the Post Office department, that it was very probable that much greater services than were at present demanded, would hereafter be required from railway companies; and if so, it was only fair and equitable that those enlarged services should not be given at the same proportion of cost. If more extensive services were required, of course they should be given at a proportionably reduced rate. What he proposed was, that the Commissioners, after consultation with the Post Office authorities, should submit a specification of the different services that would be required from the companies. The companies should be called upon to furnish, in every new Railway Bill, a scale of the prices which they were disposed to charge to the Post Office authorities; and the Commissioners should make it their business to report on the matter to Parliament. But as in the case of fares and tolls, so too in this, it was requisite that there should be a distinct limitation as to time; and as circumstances might, in this instance more rapidly than in the other, occur to justify a change, he would suggest the limitation should be taken for five years only. The next point on which he would propose legislation, referred to the question of the punctuality of trains. There was no point on which the public and the companies were more deeply interested, than on that which had reference to the punctuality of trains. He had heard it stated by many gentlemen who had large property sunk in railway projects, that their local traffic was the most important item in their receipts; and there could be no question that the advantage of local traffic, as far as the public were concerned, very much consisted in punctuality. It was not so much the speed of the trains as their punctuality that was regarded by a man who had to go a short distance. If he had to wait at the station for the train, it would be scarcely worth his while taking it at all for a short distance. At the same time, however, it was clear that this punctuality was an object that was not to be attained by direct means. They could not regulate these matters by penalties. The object could only be promoted by bringing publicity and public opinion to bear as much as possible upon matters of this kind. He would propose that it should be made imperative on every railway company to keep, at such stations as the companies should appoint, a correct register of the arrival and departure of every train. This was already done for their own satisfaction; but he proposed that for the future the registry should be kept by an officer expressly appointed for the purpose by the company, but appointed under the sanction of the Commissioners. That there might be ample opportunity for checking the accuracy of the entries, he would suggest that the table should be hung up for a given time at the station for the inspection of the public; and that it should be subsequently forwarded to the Commissioners. The Commissioners should make an annual report to Parliament on the punctuality of the trains throughout the country, and should call attention to the effects of such punctuality or want of punctuality not only on the convenience, but on the safety of the public; for he contended that safety was quite as much affected as convenience by a want of punctuality. With respect to the cheap trains, some additional regulations might be advantageously introduced. Hon. Members were aware, that as things stood at present there was a law declaring that every railway company should run at least one train in the day, by which passengers were to be conveyed at not more than one penny per mile, in carriages provided with seats, and protected from the weather, in a manner to be approved by the Commissioners. These trains were bound to travel at an average speed of not less than twelve miles an hour, and to start at a period of the day most likely to suit the convenience of the class of passengers they were intended to convey, and to be approved by the Commissioners. Now, he did not propose any change in the principle of these regulations; but he begged attention to this fact, that companies would fulfil the requisitions of that Act by travelling at the rate of twenty or thirty miles an hour for a certain period, and then leaving the passengers on the road-side, perhaps for two or three hours, before the company might find it compatible with their convenience to forward them to the end of their journey. This appeared to him a manifest perversion of the meaning of the Act. He did not think it by any means a fair mode of proceeding, nor did he think it could ever be the intention of the Legislature that any such option as that now exercised should be extended to companies. For these reasons, and for the interests of the public, he thought it was expedient that the duration of the stoppages, as well as all the other matters specified in the Act, might, where necessary, come under the cognizance of the Commissioners. With respect to the number of passengers to be carried in each of the carriages, he would observe that this was a matter in respect of which it was not at present possible to enforce any restriction; but it appeared to him desirable that the number of passengers should be defined by the Commissioners, and printed upon the outside of each carriage. Another advantageous regulation was, that whenever they travelled by night, there should be a light in the carriage. He now came to another question, and one which related to disputes between railway companies, and in which he considered the Commissioners might have the power of interfering with advantage. He found this view of the case confirmed by the evidence of Mr. Hawkshaw, engineer to the Leeds and Manchester Railway, given before the Committee of last Session of which the hon. Member for Montrose was chairman. Referring to the advantage a Railway Board would be, that hon. Member asked—

> "You consider that they might act as arbitrators in disputes and differences between companies?—Yes; in many cases where the traffic is destroyed altogether, because one company does not understand its own interest, or takes a different view of it from another company, and the consequence is, that you cannot get on at all. There are a number of links in a chain, and the middle link may say, 'We will not be troubled with this kind of traffic—we will not be annoyed with it.' That is a case in which the interference of the board would be very useful."

Mr. Glynn also says in his evidence—

> "I thought that that department should be a controlling body with regard to railway companies amongst themselves in many particulars, and between them and the public; for instance, in the case of working two lines in connexion. Such things have occurred that one company has refused to put on second-class trains to meet second-class trains coming to it, and many other cases of inconvenient working."

Now, suppose the case of two competing lines meeting in a given point, and a third line forming a continuation of both from this point; and suppose the third line to be in the hands of one of the two rival companies, it is obvious that this company might, by the turning of its trains, and in other ways, inflict serious injury on its rival. Now, this was a case that would require the interference of the Commissioners. As the law now stood, if any two or more railway companies having a common terminus, or a portion of the same line in common, had any dispute, the Commissioners had full power to make such regulations as might appear to them most conducive to the safety of the public. He was for adopting the same words as were used in the Act; but he would enlarge them, and authorize interference on the part of the Commissioners, not only where the public safety was concerned, but also in cases where the public were exposed to serious inconvenience and the disadvantages attendant on want of sufficient accommodation. But it was to be understood that this interference was only to be undertaken in cases where the complaint came from one of the railway companies in question. Then there was another point as to the formation of railways, respecting the police requisite for preserving order. In Scotland, he believed, the sheriff had the power of requiring the appointment of a sufficient force; but in England the justices possessed this power only in cases in which actual outrage had occurred; and he would, therefore, propose that, in every case of the formation of a railway, if two justices of the peace reported to the Commissioners that any additional number of policemen ought to be appointed, the Commissioners might require such appointment. There were some other points to which he would not then allude, and which might be thought of minor importance; such as concerning the by-laws of the companies, and the convenience required for the transportation of the military from one place to another; but he should mention that he would propose to give the Commissioners a general power of calling for returns from the railway companies, and of testing the accuracy of such returns, when necessary, by a reference to books. He was sorry to have detained the House so long; but he could not sit down without referring to the subject of giving compensation to the relatives of persons killed by accidents on railways, on which a question had been asked by the hon. and gallant Member for Lincoln. There had latterly been an alteration of the law on this subject; for last Session a law had been passed, giving a right of action for compensation to the relations of persons killed by accidents. Such being the case, he did not feel inclined to propose any additional legislation on the subject, because it was desirable to see how the present Act would work; and if any other were found necessary, he thought that it ought to be general, and not confined to railways. He had now, he believed, gone through the main provisions which he had the honour of proposing for adoption in this Bill. He did not mean to propose it as a complete measure, because it was obvious that a measure of this nature could not be complete, and that further experience must give rise to further improvements; but this he might say, that he trusted it would be found by the public a useful amendment of the existing laws, without being, at the same time, injurious to the railway companies themselves. The right hon. Gentleman concluded by asking leave to bring in the Bill.

Mr. AGLIONBY hoped he should not be deemed guilty of presumption in rising thus early to address the House. He felt bound to say, that during the fourteen or fifteen years that he had been a Member of the House, it never had been his lot to hear any Member make a more clear or straightforward statement than that which had been just made by the right hon. Gentleman. It was a statement on a subject of very great importance and great interest; and he must congratulate the House and the public at the manner in which the right hon. Gentleman had commenced in that House the discharge of his official duties. His reason for rising so early was, for the purpose of offering a suggestion; and he would remark, that in offering the suggestion he was about to make, he merely spoke as one of the public, having an interest in the well-doing of railways, and participating in the advantages which the public derived from them; but, at the same time, he should observe, that he had no pecuniary interest or share in them. The point to which he was about to call the attention of the right hon. Gentleman and the House, was one that fairly came within the limits and province of his Bill. It was one in which he conceived the public had stronger interest than in many of the points to which the right hon. Gentleman had alluded. He might be told that the proposition he was about to make, would amount to an interference with the directors of railways, and that it was one of which they would themselves take care, without the supervision of any board whatever. That might be a sufficient answer to his proposition, were it not that there were three points which the right hon. Gentleman intended to bring within the province of the Commissioners, which were analogous to the proposition which he was about to make. The point to which he (Mr. Aglionby) would call the attention of the House, and to which the right hon. Gentleman had not alluded, was one in which the public had a great interest: he meant that a number of stations should be selected and fixed for the trains to stop at, and at those stations there should be a certain number of trains always required to stop. That should be a matter of regulation for the public convenience. He admitted it would be an interference with the directors; but it would be for the right hon. Gentleman to say whether or not it would be a reasonable interference with them. The right hon. Gentleman proposed himself to interfere in cases which he considered to be analogous. The first case was with respect to fares; and why should the Commissioners have the power of interference in the case of fares, any more than they should have it with regard to the case which he had suggested? The next was with regard to punctuality; and the other case to which the right hon. Gentleman had alluded, was the duration of stoppages. And why had they interfered with them, but for the protection of certain classes of the public who had not received the full benefit of legislative enactment? With respect to the case to which he had referred, it appeared, that while great attention was given at present to passengers travelling a long distance, sufficient attention was not paid to passengers travelling a short distance; and he submitted, that every man going a short distance had a right to complain, except the railway enabled him to alight near his destination by frequent stoppages. There should, he conceived, be this general rule laid down, that wherever a railway proposed to supply a particular district with accommodation, and when it could be fairly proved that the district had been deprived of other modes of conveyance, it was necessary for the interest of the public to have a station at that place, at which a certain number of trains should stop in the day. How far having those stopping trains might interfere with the interests of railway companies, he did not know; but he would suggest to the right hon. Gentleman to take his proposition into consideration before the Bill went into Committee.

Mr. HUME wished to know if any means were to be adopted by which uniform and regular communication for the public on Sundays would be secured. This he considered to be a subject of importance, when they saw whole districts canvassing and discussing it as they now were, and when they saw that no less than nineteen towns had presented petitions against the stoppage that had taken place. It appeared that two millions and a half of persons were interested in the traffic, and he believed only two directors had prevented it. He did hope that some means would be adopted by which uniform and regular communication on Sundays might be secured. There was another point which he also thought of importance to the public—that was, to have more speedy communication by the third-class trains. At present they travelled at very inconvenient hours; and he (Mr. Hume) thought they had been hitherto too negligent of the interests of the persons who were accustomed to travel in them, and who had not the means of paying the increased charges that were demanded in the other classes. He thought the Legislature should rather assist them than throw any impediment in their way, and he hoped the Commissioners would also be able to give their attention to that point.

Mr. ELLICE said, he would not interrupt the present discussion for a very long time. He had only to observe, that he agreed in the opinion already expressed, that the right hon. Gentleman who had introduced the present Motion, had, in the manner in which he had laid it before the House, furnished the best possible exposition, and given the best example of the good that might be expected from the board of which the right hon. Gentleman was a president. He wished to put a question to the right hon. Gentleman. It was this: What was the course to be adopted with respect to the Bills of the present Session? He had not had time to examine, himself, the details of those Bills; but he took it that there were before the House Bills involving the expenditure of a sum of forty millions of capital. It was very important they should know what course was intended to be taken before the present Bill reached Committee. He was sure, in the present state of public business, his right hon. Friend did not expect to carry the Bill which he had announced to the House before those Bills were referred to Committees; and it was desirable the public should understand what course was intended to be adopted with respect to the Bills of this Session.

Mr. STRUTT stated, in reply, that the Bill which he had had the honour of proposing that evening, respected principally the Bills of future Sessions, and did not so much refer to those of the present Session, as the time for that had now gone by. With respect to the bearing of the new regulations on Bills now before the House, he could only observe, that by the Act of last Session the only additional powers that had been given to the new board beyond those with which the Board of Trade had been invested, were the power of making local inquiries and the power of reporting to the Crown; and, therefore, if there were any special matters relating to the Bills of the present Session on which Parliament required reports from the board, it would be in the power of Parliament to refer such matters to the board. But at this period it would be impossible for the board to go into the general questions relating to these Bills, or into the consideration of matters including the merits of the Bills, both because of the want of time, and also because the board had not yet such an organization of officers as would enable it to conduct the local inquiries satisfactorily. But questions of amalgamation, or any questions of that nature which the House might refer to them, they would consider and deal with to the best of their ability, and be ready, if required, to report upon them. He would humbly submit, however, that in all orders of reference, questions of this nature should be kept distinct from questions relating to the merits of the Bills; because, as he had intimated, both from want of time and want of officers, it was impossible that the board could report satisfactorily on questions of merits during the present Session. He was so anxious that the board should be enabled to discharge its duty satisfactorily to the country, that he thought it most important that they should not at first have any duties cast upon them which they were unprepared to deal with. Perhaps the right hon. Gentleman might devise some method by which his suggestions could be carried into effect.

Mr. ELLICE thought that the matters to which he had referred, and which were of extreme importance, ought not to be left to individual Members of the House. He wished to put a question to his right hon. Friend the Chancellor of the Exchequer upon a subject which had been specially referred to in the report made by the Railway Committee of last Session, of which he (Mr. Ellice) had been chairman. He wished to know whether it was the intention of Her Majesty's Government to propose any Standing Order, under which all matters relating to the capital of companies, and their power of raising loans, in the Bills of this Session, should be referred to the new board, for the purpose of its making, upon these subjects, reports which should be laid before the Committees on the different Bills before they proceeded to consider the clauses relating to the capital of the company, and its power of raising loans?

Mr. ENTWISLE most heartily concurred with the hon. and learned Member for Cockermouth (Mr. Aglionby), in what he had said of the ability with which the scheme of the right hon. Gentleman had been brought forward. With regard to the degree of discretion and control which the board was to exercise over the new schemes before the House, and as to their power of adjudication between rival schemes, he begged to observe, that, as had been forcibly stated in the report of a Committee of the other House, it sometimes happened that two schemes were put forward by two rival companies, neither of them being the best attainable line for the public, but each being put forward by the rival companies upon the ground of being advantageous to their own personal interests. Thus it was that the public often did not get the best line. Now, he was inclined to think it a defect in the measure of the right hon. Gentleman, that it did not give the power to the board of placing a veto on such lines as the board might see reason to disapprove; nor did it give them the power to originate, or cause to be originated, any line that might be really calculated to satisfy the wants of the district, in such a case as that to which he had referred. This suggestion he had ventured to make, with a sincere desire to promote the object of the right hon. Gentleman. As to the objection to vesting a veto in the board, that it would stand between the House of Commons and the parties, he thought it did not altogether apply; for the veto, if conferred, would be exercised, he was convinced, only for the purpose of keeping out of the House many schemes that were not entitled to apply to Parliament at all. A veto would not interfere with the authority of Parliament; and he would therefore wish to call the attention of the board to the question, whether they could not effect this object themselves by means of local surveys, which they must often be obliged to undertake, in order to determine between the conflicting claims of two companies, so as to be enabled to put a stop to such schemes as might appear clearly undesirable, before coming to that House. At any rate, he thought the board ought to have authority over such schemes, and be able to put a stop to those which their officers, upon local survey, found to be clearly inadequate to the wants of the districts through which it was proposed that they should pass; and he even thought that the board ought to have power to originate themselves the line that ought to be constructed in such cases. Now, with regard to the authority the report of the board ought to bear, after the minute and accurate investigation of which it would be the result, and when they signified their approval of one scheme and disapproval of the other and conflicting one, though their determination might be, in such case, that the latter scheme ought not to be brought before a Committee of the House, yet it might be right for the House to consider whether that might not be done by way of appeal against the decision of the board, costs being allowed to the party whose claim was confirmed before the Committee. He would not say anything as to the control to be exercised by the board over fares and tolls from time to time, except that he thought the period suggested by the right hon. Gentleman was somewhat short — too short, perhaps, to ascertain completely the effect of the rates. Before the true result could be arrived at of the enormous amalgamations that were going on, they must have a longer experience than could be derived from a ten years' trial. He had not risen to offer any opposition to that or any other part of the right hon. Gentleman's scheme; but he could not help expressing his fear, that the true result of the operation of a tariff of tolls and fares could not be ascertained with respect to some of the vast undertakings that were now in existence, except after a longer period of trial. With respect to the stopping of Parliamentary trains, it was very true that those trains did stop often, and more often perhaps than was requisite; but it was often necessary that Parliamentary trains, travelling much slower, as they did, should be moved out of the way of other trains, not only on account of the goods' traffic, but for the safety of passengers who were conveyed at a more speedy rate. The hon. and learned Member (Mr. Aglionby) had made some observations with regard to the propriety of enforcing frequent stoppings on the line; and that which was in general the merit of a railway, and the proof of its success, the hon. and learned Gentleman would take as the test of its delinquency, namely, that it had put down other means of conveyance in the same district. He thought this was one of those accusations against the railway companies which tended to refute themselves.

The CHANCELLOR OF THE EXCHEQUER considered the suggestion of his right hon. Friend (Mr. Ellice) was well worthy of attention. It would probably be very desirable that the report his right hon. Friend had alluded to should be made by the Railway Board.

MR. GOULBURN said, that the right hon. Gentleman (Mr. Ellice) had alluded to the powers given to railway companies to raise large sums of money by means of loans on securities that were transferable from hand to hand. Now, in his opinion, there was no reason why railway companies, like other parties, should not raise money on securities that were substantial; but the objection was, that the powers given to railway companies by Parliament put in their hands the means of raising loans by what was in fact a sort of paper money, entering into the circulation throughout the country, and that was manifestly inconvenient. He had been so unfortunate as only to hear a part of the right hon. Gentleman's (Mr. Strutt's) statement, and possibly this subject had been touched upon by the right hon. Gentleman; but in case nothing of the kind had suggested itself to the right hon. Gentleman, he trusted the subject would be taken into consideration, for it was a subject which he was anxious should not be overlooked, not only as regarded the railways themselves, but the financial state of the country.

MR. B. DENISON thought the scheme of the right hon. Gentleman was so good that he hoped no attempt would be made to give a veto to the board, for he was quite sure that the House of Commons would never assent to it. He begged to suggest to the right hon. Gentleman, whether the board could not yet undertake the investigation of the Bills of this year. If those Bills were to stand over until next year, the benefits of the new board would be lost for this year with respect to railway legislation. It was very much in consequence of the Board of Trade not being in the habit of examining the parties to rival schemes face to face, that the public had not had confidence in their reports; and he was glad to find that the right hon. Gentleman proposed to examine parties face to face. If the Railway Department of the Board of Trade had done that, he believed it would have been still on its legs. But he must suggest that something should be done with respect to the Bills now before the House; there was abundant time for it; the parties would be content to wait till Easter to allow time for the necessary preparatory steps to be taken; and it would save an immense deal of trouble, and an immense deal of expense.

MR. R. HODGSON protested against any delay with the Bills now before the House awaiting the results of this scheme. He was quite certain that it would be fatal to many of those Bills to be protracted to the end of the Session.

MR. FERRAND had not had the pleasure of hearing the statement of the evening, not knowing that it would come on so early; but he begged to ask the attention of the House to a matter affecting his own neighbourhood. A Railway Act had received the assent of the Legislature last year, under which a line had been made in his neighbourhood, crossing several turnpike roads on a level, and that in a thickly inhabited manufacturing district, to the great danger of the lives of the public. He had mentioned the circumstance to the right hon. Gentleman, but the right hon. Gentleman said he could only regret that the inspector had no power to interfere; but when he told the House that this railway crossed on a level a turnpike road to Keighley, along which 2,000 factory operatives had to pass to their work every day of the week, he would ask them whether, if the authority entrusted to the inspector did not permit him to interfere, there ought not to be authority to interfere vested somewhere, so as to protect the public, by obliging the company to build a bridge, or avoid by some other means the danger to which the people were exposed. This railroad, besides, crossed on a level five or six other turnpike roads. He was certain it could not be opened a single month without loss of life ensuing. When he applied to the right hon. Gentleman, the reply was that he had not the power to interfere. This was to be lamented; and in this case it was sufficiently evident that the Committee on the Bill had not sufficiently inquired into the circumstances of the line. He was anxious to draw the attention of the House to some other circumstances, by which he had been a sufferer to the amount of 4,000*l.* or 5,000*l.* He was tenant in tail of an estate through which this railway ran for two miles; and though the Act of Parliament compelled the company to give him notice that they meant to take the land, the tenant for life had the power of making a bargain behind his (Mr. Ferrand's) back with the directors for whatever sum they could agree upon, and the consequence had been a loss to him (Mr. Ferrand) to the extent he had stated. He had written to the directors for redress; but the chairman had kept him a full month without any answer, till at last, on the 1st of January, he received a letter, stating that he could have no redress, and finishing off by wishing him the compliments of the season. He protested against such legislation. The House had allowed a Bill to pass in so slovenly a manner as to enable a railway company to rob him as he had been robbed. Why was it that the directors of a railway company should have power given them to make a private bargain for their own advantage, which had the effect of robbing any person of his just rights? He had no enmity to railways; he thought they had conferred great benefits on the country; and he thought no man had conferred greater benefit on the country than his right hon. Friend (Mr. Hudson); but he said, while they legislated, let them do justice between man and man; and if the railways were to be the highways of this country, they ought to be obliged to do justice to all the parties concerned; and he hoped that some alteration would be made in the present law, so as to protect the interest of tenants in tail.

MR. HUDSON would give the plan his patient consideration. He wished to quiet the fears and alarms of his hon. Friend (Mr. Ferrand) with respect to the railway to which his hon. Friend had referred. He believed that it was rarely that accidents had taken place on crossings on a level; accidents, however, had been found to occur where the turnpikes were carried over railways by bridges. It must be remembered that we could not have unmixed good in anything. With respect to the remarks of the right Gentleman (Mr. Goulburn), as to the power of borrowing money given by Railway Acts to companies, it was during the Administration with which the right hon. Gentleman had been connected, that Mr. Gladstone had introduced a Bill which limited that power of borrowing; it put a stop to the power of borrowing by way of loan notes, but the companies were given five years in which to bring in their outstanding loan notes. He must, however, say this for the directors of companies, that, in several cases, had they not taken on them to exceed the powers conferred by their Acts, many of those undertakings which now contributed so much to the ornament and advantage of the country could not have proceeded. The directors of railway companies had on many occasions been called on, in order to prevent the stopping of the works, to give their own personal security. One thing had struck him during the able statement of the right hon. Gentleman (Mr. Strutt), namely, that he was attempting to do far too much, and much more than the board would be able to do satisfactorily to the public. With respect to tolls and fares, the right hon. Gentleman claimed the power of revision once in every ten years without any limitation; but when Mr. Gladstone introduced the Bill to which he had referred, it was thought right by Parliament, that the Board of Trade should not have the power of reducing tolls unless where the interest paid on the shares exceeded a certain rate. If it were otherwise, the interference of the board might totally destroy the dividends of the company. In giving that right of revision of tolls to Parliament, it was proper to put some limitation upon its exercise, so as not wholly to deprive of their fair remuneration those parties who had invested their capital in railways. It would appear that one of the objects proposed by the right hon. Gentleman was to secure punctuality in the trains; and for this purpose there was to be a superintendent appointed, who was to require greater punctuality on the part of the companies. He did hope that the right hon. Gentleman would have gone a little further, and that he would at once have suggested that the railway companies were not as punctual as they ought to be, and that something was wrong in the present management of railways. Now, he was by no means sure that the effect of the proposed superintendence would not be to diminish the speed of trains. Railway directors, in the apprehension that they would not be able on all occasions to insure punctuality, would probably not give that speed to the public which they now enjoyed. He begged to tell the House that a perfectly punctual system could not be attained. There were so many things that affected the speed of trains, the state of the atmosphere, the wind, the state of the rails, the coke and water, all these rendered it perfectly impossible that perfect punctuality should be insured on all occasions. But the great interest of railway companies was to ensure punctuality as much as possible, and to make every exertion for the purpose of increasing their traffic. He believed they had attained upon railways a degree of punctuality fully equal to that obtained in any other means of conveyance that had ever been attempted. He doubted whether Parliament would by its interference obtain greater punctuality; but at the same time he did not complain, because Parliament might have the right to undertake this legislation upon minute points. It had little to do, perhaps, and it must amuse itself, he supposed, at other people's expense. Instead of guiding the commercial enterprise of this country, he must say that this was not marching in the onward direction; it was a retrograde movement. He believed that railway undertakings would have prospered much more, had there been less interference on the part of Parliament. The more responsibility they threw upon the directors, and the less upon Parliament or the Railway Board, the better for the public. It appeared, that under the new Bill, the fares were not to be reduced without giving notice to the Commissioners. ["Raised."] Well, altered; but, surely, it was hard that the directors should be obliged to come to the board to ask their consent to excise powers which Parliament had given them under the Act. [Mr. STRUTT: Notice would have to be given of the intention to raise fares.] It had been complained that one railway had raised its fares without giving any previous notice to the public. Perhaps it would have been better if they had given notice. His system was not that of raising, but of reducing fares; but it was not his practice to give notice of his intention; and the company in question had only followed a similar plan in a reverse case. He thought it would be impolitic to press this Bill at present, and that there would be no possibility of carrying out the proposed inspection in a manner satisfactory to the public. Still, on behalf of the railway interest, he would say that they would give the Bill that consideration which it deserved; and if it were not unfair to their interests, they were willing to offer all the suggestions in their power to make the measure a fair and useful one to all parties.

MR. MANGLES wished to guard against committing himself to any of the details of the measure; but he must, at the same time, emphatically disclaim any participation in the jealousy and fear expressed by the right hon. Member for Sunderland with regard to the superintendence of the Railway Board. He was sure he expressed the opinion of the gentlemen with whom he was associated, the directors of the London and North-Western Railway, when he said that, being well aware, and having always maintained, that the principle of competition could not be applied to railroads, they were not only willing, but anxious, that the only other effectual protection to the public should be afforded in the shape of strong and even stringent control, exercised by some competent public authority such as the newly-constituted Railway Board. He wished to ask one question of the right hon. Gentleman. The right hon. Gentleman had omitted to explain one point upon which he was most anxious to be informed. He did not understand the right hon. Gentleman to say whether, in the event of reporting upon competing lines, it was intended that the Railway Board should distinctly state to which of the lines it gave the preference, and also the grounds of that preference. This he held to be of the utmost importance; and this was a labour which the late Railway Department of the Board of Trade, in his opinion, performed most satisfactorily. He was, moreover, of opinion that a great part of the mischief caused last year by over-speculation, had its origin in the readiness with which that House threw overboard the most excellent reports of the Board of Trade. He believed that the great majority of those reports were correct, and that they would, if they had been acted on, have obviated a great many of the evils by which the country was afflicted last year.

Mr. STRUTT said, it would be impossible for the Board to report on the comparative merits of two competing schemes without expressing a preference. The hon. Member for Knaresborough had complained of a railway crossing the public highways near a populous place in his neighbourhood on the level. The Act authorizing that line had passed, and the unfortunate results to which the hon. Member referred were attributable to the conduct of Parliament alone, and were beyond the interference of the Commissioners. The Commissioners had only a power of interference to a certain extent: for instance, if a company should think fit to substitute a bridge for a crossing on the level, the Commissioners had the power to authorize this deviation from the original plan; but they had no further power save in the shape of remonstrance. He regretted that the right hon. Member for Sunderland should have misunderstood one part of his speech, with respect to the periodical revision of tolls by Parliament. The right hon. Member seemed to think that the object of that provision was to restrict the profits of railway companies; but he had distinctly stated that the principle on which, in his opinion, such a revision should take place, was exactly the principle on which the fares were first established, acting fairly between the railway companies and the public—giving the railway companies every due advantage, and affording to the public the advantages derivable from an altered state of circumstances, so that in the event of such altered circumstances Parliament might have the power of revision. The right hon. Member also said that it would be impossible for the Commissioners to ensure punctuality. Of course it would be impossible to secure perfect punctuality; neither had he supposed nor asserted such a thing to be possible. All he proposed was that the facts should be ascertained, so that where a railway company was remarkable for its great punctuality, and for the skill and attention with which it succeeded in affording accommodation to the public, the fact should be known; and that, on the other hand, where a company was remarkable for conduct the reverse of this, especially where their remissness led to accidents, that fact should likewise be laid before Parliament and the public. There was one more point on which the right hon. Gentleman was anxious for information—namely, with reference to lowering the fares. He begged to tell the right hon. Gentleman that under this Bill he might lower his fares when he pleased—no notice would be required.

Leave given. Bill brought in and read a first time.

RAILWAYS (IRELAND).

On the Order of the Day for the Second Reading of the Railways (Ireland) Bill,

Mr. SMITH O'BRIEN rose for the purpose of appealing to the noble Lord the Member for Lynn to postpone his measure respecting railways in Ireland; and he might perhaps be permitted to state in very few words the grounds on which he made this request. It was only a week since the measure had been brought before the House; and it must therefore be perfectly obvious that the people of Ireland could have had no opportunity of expressing their opinions upon it. It was due to the importance of the proposal, that their constituents should have an opportunity of representing their views on the subject; and he thought it neither fair towards the Irish people or Irish Members that the subject should be forced to a premature decision. It was moreover notorious that the Government had staked their existence on the issue of the division; and the consequence therefore would be, that if the House should pronounce a decision adverse to the view taken by the Government, there would possibly be a change of Ministry. The consequence of such a change would be to throw into confusion legislation of the most urgent and immediate importance to the poor of Ireland—measures on which, perhaps, depended the existence of many thousands of their fellow-countrymen in Ireland. He held, therefore, that they were not at liberty, for the sake of gaining a great contingent advantage, to risk the possible loss of human life. He had entertained the hope that this measure would not have been discussed by either section of the House as a party question. He had entertained the hope that the noble Lord the Member for the city of London, and the Government, would have proposed to consider the question one upon which it was not necessary to stake the existence of the Government; but that they would rather have acquiesced in what appeared to be the general wish of the House. For his own part, he had no hesitation in saying that if the Government had brought forward a proposal which, on the whole, appeared more desirable than that introduced by the noble Lord the Member for Lynn, he should have felt himself bound to have given it his preference, were it only for the sake of avoiding the contingent change of the Ministry, which he thought by no means desirable. At the same time the proposal of the noble Member for Lynn not having been met by any counter proposal, and the noble Lord's measure being one calculated to give immediate employment and relief to many thousands of the Irish people, without any eventual loss either to this country, and without the imposition of any burden on Irish resources; finding that proposal placed in juxtaposition with a system of temporary expedients, which imposed on this country and on Ireland an unquestionable burden, for which no return was to be given in the way of national advantage, he had no hesitation in tendering, under existing circumstances, his support to the noble Lord; and upon that point, therefore, he did not wish that any doubt or hesitation should exist as to the course which he, at least, was prepared to take: and indeed he thought that a very general disposition prevailed amongst the Irish Members to support the noble Lord. He was, nevertheless, anxious that they should have an opportunity of considering this question with reference to its real merits, apart from the consideration of the existence of a Ministry, and apart from the consideration of the possibility of inflicting upon their fellow-countrymen the inconveniences and sufferings which might arise from arresting the progress of remedial legislation. With these views he should make an appeal to the noble Lord; and he expressed, he believed, the opinions of many other hon. Members, as well as his own, and would ask him to postpone for a few days the second stage of his Bill.

Mr. SHAW concurred with his hon. Friend (Mr. S. O'Brien) in requesting his noble Friend (Lord G. Bentinck) to postpone the second reading of the Bill; but he would not do so without frankly telling his noble Friend the feeling which he (Mr. Shaw) entertained on the subject. He was favourable to the principle of his noble Friend's Bill; he (Mr. Shaw) had always been in favour of a general system of railways for Ireland, to be undertaken or controlled by the Government, and had supported the measure brought forward with that view by the noble Lord at the head of the Woods and Forests, who was then Secretary for Ireland (Lord Morpeth). He (Mr. Shaw) had every hope that if the Bill was postponed, and that the Government found that it was a measure wholly irrespective of party, and applicable to the exigencies of Ireland, that they would give it their sanction, or themselves introduce one of a similar character; but it was only candid that he should inform his noble Friend (Lord G. Bentinck), that if he then pressed forward the second reading of the Bill, in opposition to the Government, and that it was to become a question on which the existence of the Government was to depend, he (Mr. Shaw) could not support the Bill to that extent. He thought that would be a most unfavourable position for the fair consideration of the measure itself; and, moreover, in the present state of parties, and the country, and, above all, the calamitous condition of Ireland, he (Mr. Shaw) would not join in attempting to put out one Ministry and form another upon such a question. He believed the most anxious and unqualified supporters of his noble Friend's Bill were also of opinion that it would be better to postpone it for the present.

Mr. H. GRATTAN would state frankly his opinions, without favour or affection for any man or party. He should do his duty to Ireland, and he trusted also to England. It was his intention to have voted for the noble Lord's Motion, and he said so openly and fearlessly. He had supported the hon. Gentleman sitting on his (Mr. Grattan's) side of the House for many years. He had been twenty years in Parliament—and never was there a time when Ireland required more the sympathy and good feeling of the people of England; and yet from his own side of the House he had heard his country attacked, the characters of Irish

Members abused, and themselves insulted. He put all that by. But the people were dying, and here were two great doctors prescribing, and the question was, which remedy was the best. He would undertake to say, that the Government ought to consent to the plans of the noble Lord opposite, and if the Government put it upon that footing, he would prove it to be a debt due to Ireland. He maintained that it was a debt due to Mr. Drummond's memory, as well as to Ireland. The plan proposed by that able man had received the sanction of Colonel Burgoyne, Mr. Griffith, and all the ablest engineers of the country; every one, in short, who had reported for the Government upon the condition of Ireland, from the year 1835 to 1847, had suggested the utility of various railway systems, and had suggested plans for improving the condition of the country; but, he asked, had any one of them been followed up, or the slightest attempt been made to carry any of them into effect? And yet thousands upon thousands of pounds had been spent in Committees of the House—in one instance no less than 60,000*l.* in one Committee—wrangling about Railway Bills. He contended that, far from being a wasteful expenditure, the measure proposed by the noble Lord would be a saving of money to the English people. For what were the proposals of the noble Lord at the head of the Government? The noble Lord had brought forward three Bills, which were certainly insufficient to meet the exigencies of the case. The famine was extending; and fever was spreading in the north of Ireland, and in Lurgan, Lough Erne, Sligo, and other parts of the country. And what was the plan adopted to relieve the distresses of the people? They had military officers, colonels, majors, and captains, spread over the country, by way of superintending the giving out of soup and meal. He (Mr. Grattan) was too old a soldier to be imposed upon; and he could not understand the necessity for employing those military gentlemen in the distribution of soup. No; he knew better what their purpose was. They were sent there to survey the lakes and mountains, and the bogs of Ireland, in order to be the better prepared, as the times were believed to be dangerous. But he wanted them to guard more effectually against the circumstances of danger; and the first and the best thing they could do would be to send all the Irish Members back again. Yes, he repeated, let them send the Irish Members home to regulate their own affairs. They could do no good where they were. He had ever honestly upheld that opinion. But to return to the point before the House. The Government measures proposed—how much money for Ireland? Let them see what the next Bill before them was. It was for 1,500,000*l.* Now, of that there were only 500,000*l.* for which the present Government could take credit; for the 1,000,000*l.* had been given before. Let them compare that with the proposal of the noble Lord the Member for Lynn. The noble Lord said, that he proposed a plan which their (the Government's) own officer had, when they were formerly in power, recommended. Mr. Drummond had recommended it; but he should say, that when Mr. Drummond died, the Government, so far as regarded Ireland, died along with him. The people should be fed. They were dying of hunger; and the noble Lord at the head of the Government proposed to advance at the rate of 1,000,000*l.* a month to feed them, so that by the month of August next the sum that will have been expended had been stated at 6,000,000*l.* Now he asked if they did not adopt a plan of expenditure which would cause a reproductive employment, how were they to get back the money? There was no immediate chance under the noble Lord's plan of getting back their money. He might with truth say that the Irish nobility and aristocracy were gone. He knew one individual who paid interest on 100,000*l.*, and another who paid 6,000*l.* a year interest money in London out of 7,000*l.* a year of ill-paid rents. In one instance, a proprietor could not cut down a tree on his estate without getting permission from an attorney; and the cases of Irish proprietors owing sums of 20,000*l.* to English capitalists were quite frequent. Why was this? Because these Irish landlords were brought over to London, and induced to remain there, by individuals who led them into expense. He would say that the remedy for such a state of things was a repeal of the Union; and, what was more, he believed that House would soon be willing to repeal it, and be glad to send Irish Members back to make laws for themselves. As he had said before, Ireland was under the care of two doctors, but he thought they were both bad doctors. They had been going on making their patient worse and worse for forty-seven years; and he thought that the patient must, therefore, be incurable, or that the doctors were bad. Compared with the temporary measures of the Government, he thought that the measure of the noble Lord the Member for Lynn was a good one, and he would, therefore, support it. With the exception of temporary measures, all that was offered to Ireland was a poor law, which they took care never to apply to England, for even under the old poor-law the right of out-door relief to the able-bodied poor was not acknowledged. He was opposed to such a measure for Ireland, because he knew the great expenses incurred by such a system. As a manager of the Mendicity Institution in Dublin, he could state that for years past that establishment had supported 3,000 persons at just one half the expense at which they could be maintained in the workhouses. ["Question!"] That was the question. The question was by which of two measures they should be taxed, and he wished to give his reasons for preferring the measure of the noble Lord to the Irish Poor Law Bill of the Government.

LORD JOHN RUSSELL: Sir, the hon. Member for the county of Limerick, and the right hon. Gentleman the Member for the University of Dublin, have asked my noble Friend the Member for Lynn to postpone the Bill, which now stands the first among the Orders of the Day, for Railways in Ireland. I rise for the purpose of putting to my noble Friend a prayer of an exactly opposite description. I wish that the noble Lord would proceed immediately with this Bill, as it now stands for the second reading; and if the noble Lord thinks that it is too late on this evening to proceed with the consideration of that Bill, I shall be quite ready to give him any priority he may require to-morrow. But that which I do object to, and which I do strongly object to, is, that this Bill should be postponed for a fortnight, leaving the whole matter in uncertainty in the meantime—leaving it a matter of uncertainty what is the plan which the Legislature will adopt, and what is to be the course of action which the Government of this country is to take. Sir, my noble Friend, in bringing forward this Motion, stated, that he had brought it forward by no means as a party Motion; and I do think my noble Friend will say that I did not answer him at all in the spirit of party. But, Sir, I was obliged to say on that occasion, and I feel now still more obliged to say, what view I take of his measure in reference both to our general policy as regards Ireland, and also as relates to the finances of the country. We cannot but feel that we are responsible for the management of those finances. We cannot but feel that we are responsible for the application of very large sums to the relief of Irish distress, and for the application of that relief in the manner which in our opinion will be most efficacious, and which will enable this country to be ready to give that support which is necessary for a most immediate and most pressing and most urgent case of distress. Now, Sir, I was therefore led to say—and I feel now that I am under the obligation to say—whether I considered or not that the borrowing of 16,000,000*l.* for the purpose of laying them out in railroads in Ireland, was consistent, in our opinion, with that which ought to be the policy of the Government of this country. I could not speak as if it were any very small sum of money, or any inferior or doubtful matter of legislation, or as if it were a matter of indifference to the country whether this should be a part of the general finances of the year or not. I am obliged to say, and as long as I fill the situation which I have now the honour to hold, I shall not hesitate in such cases from declaring, whether I entirely adopt the plan of the noble Lord, or whether I think that it ought to be rejected; and I have no hesitation in stating my opinion that that plan ought to be rejected, and that it is not consistent with the plan of the finances of the year which we think it our duty to adopt. Sir, if the House should agree to go into the consideration of this question, my right hon. Friend the Chancellor of the Exchequer and I shall be prepared to state our reasons why we have come to that conclusion; but at present all that I ask of my noble Friend to do is, to take one of two courses—either to bring this question to an immediate decision, in order that the House may know, and that the country may know, what is to be the policy which is to be pursued, or else to give up entirely his plan for the present Session. I do not care which of the two courses the noble Lord takes. I am ready to enter into the discussion. I am ready (if he thinks proper) to see it abandoned. I will tell him fairly at once, that though I do not wish to commit the Government either to adopt or reject any scheme for the promotion of railways in Ireland—for it would be imprudent so to commit the Government—yet I will say, on the other hand, that I do not think or expect that in the course of the present Session we shall have any large or distinct measure to produce for the promotion of railways on the part of Her Majesty's Government. I therefore do not wish to induce any man to vote against the noble Lord on this occasion from an expectation that we shall bring forward another measure which would ensure the expenditure of any similar sum of money. I will not say more now than that I think the plan of my noble Friend in 1839 was a wise plan, and that such is my general opinion on the subject; but I think that I have said enough to show I have a fair right to ask—and I think the House has a fair right to ask—that my noble Friend should not listen to the proposition that is now made to postpone his measure. After stating the general nature of my objections the other night, the noble Lord, after hearing those objections, got up at the end of the discussion, and said that it was the intention of himself and his Friends to put forward and bring to a decision this question. Sir, I have no objection to that determination. If the plans of my noble Friend are those approved of by the House and by the country, let them be adopted. All that we ask is, to have the opinion of the House on the subject, or that my noble Friend will cease to urge it on the consideration of Parliament this Session.

MR. BERNAL OSBORNE said, he was not one of those who thought they should let a question with which the monetary interests of this country were so deeply concerned, be postponed for a fortnight, for he thought that these great interests would be affected by such a matter being left hanging in suspense for such a length of time. He thought that hon. Gentlemen who asked for a postponement of the question were not justified in so doing by their own views. His hon. Friend the Member for Limerick said, he supported the Bill because he thought it would give immediate relief to the labouring population. Now, he was for going on at once with the Bill for that very reason. The noble Lord at the head of Her Majesty's Government should remember that after the month of April the population would be totally unemployed, except in agricultural labour; and if no system of employment were introduced, many would then be idle. He supported the measure also, because he was of opinion that it would put an end to the wasteful system of expenditure that was now going on in Ireland, and which was at the same time draining this country of immense sums of money, and bringing a great deal of unnecessary odium on Ireland and her people. For these reasons he had listened to the speech of the noble Lord the Member for Lynn the other night with great satisfaction; and if the noble Lord went on with his Motion, he should be prepared to prove that the measure of the noble Lord was much better than the system of lending money to the landlords. For these reasons he would join his request to that of the noble Lord the Member for London, that the Motion should not be postponed.

An HON. MEMBER observed, that if the Irish Members did not now support the measure of the noble Lord the Member for Lynn, they would not deserve to have it brought forward on any future occasion.

MR. P. S. BUTLER said, it appeared to him to be very difficult for the noble Lord the Member for Lynn to decide what course to take under the circumstances in which he was placed. He was not at liberty to tell the secrets of the prison house, or else he would mention to the House the result of a meeting of Irish Members that had taken place that day. [" Order!"] If he could not allude to the meeting, he had, at all events, a right to speak of what occurred afterwards. The Irish Members met in conclave, and they came to this conclusion almost unanimously, and after having entered into a long discussion, which he should be extremely sorry, at this period of the debate, to repeat to the House, that, under all the circumstances, it would be desirable that the noble Lord the Member for Lynn should postpone his Motion to a more convenient opportunity. He was merely giving a simple narrative, and he had not, individually, up to the present moment, expressed any opinion of his own on the matter. They conveyed, in the most respectful manner, their sentiments to the noble Lord; and they had been subsequently led to believe, that the noble Lord, in the most courteous manner, conveyed to them an intimation that he was willing, on the present most important occasion, to be guided by the opinions of the Irish Members. He would not have risen on the present occasion if he had not seen the extraordinary predicament in which the noble Lord was placed. He said this from seeing two Irish Members calling on the noble Lord to withdraw his Motion, while two others begged of him to go on. There was no Irish Member less disposed than he was to act in a spirit of hostility to

Her Majesty's present Government; but having a few days ago stated his opinion that the measure of the noble Lord was eminently calculated to benefit the country in the present state of almost mendicancy to which it was reduced, and having also stated that he was one of those who felt bound to give that measure his most unqualified support, he certainly would not shrink from that promise; and while he hoped and trusted the noble Lord would consent to a postponement, yet if the noble Lord felt himself to be so trammelled that he must go on that evening, he felt himself unquestionably bound as a man of honour and a gentleman, and as one who did not wish to compromise his character in any way, not to shrink from the pledge which he had given, and he would therefore divide with the noble Lord.

Mr. M. J. O'CONNELL had never listened to a discussion which gave him more pain than the present. In the very first instance there was a difference of opinion between hon. Gentlemen from Ireland. He had hoped to have seen an unanimous feeling on this subject; but here were they hampered between two contending impressions—approbation of a principle which most of them thoroughly approved, and apprehension of danger to their country by checking the measures of Government, which, though only temporary, were of vital importance to the interests of Ireland. He had hoped, he said, to have seen Irish Members unanimous in supporting the principle of the Bill, which was not so much the advance of 16,000,000*l*. as the introduction of railways into Ireland by means of the credit of Great Britain; and that it would have been disembarrassed of the other grave question which was now mixed up with it. But, unfortunately for Ireland, it was her curse that her representatives could never agree, even upon matters the most vital. He must himself own that he had been disappointed at the course of the noble Lord the First Minister of the Crown, at his pressing upon the noble Lord the Member for Lynn to move the second reading of his Bill, for he was one of those who were inclined to support the policy of the Government, and therefore it seemed hardly fair for the noble Lord to press for a decision on the measure. Hon. Members from Ireland were placed thereby in a most embarrassing situation. How to choose between two evils was a matter of considerable difficulty—a matter so difficult, that, but for the recollection of the principle that, in this case, the boldest course was the best, he should have been at a loss how to decide. If there had been any chance, he should have added his request to those of his Friends to the noble Lord (Lord G. Bentinck) to postpone the second reading; but he feared that, after the call of the noble Lord (Lord J. Russell), one from him would have very little weight. If, therefore, the measure went on, he should leave the responsibility of it upon the noble Lord and his followers.

Lord G. BENTINCK: Sir, I feel in a very painful and difficult position. "No change has come over the spirit of my dream." As I was upon the first day of the Session, so I am now, deeply impressed with the conviction that the measure which I have introduced to the House, is one in which the dearest interests of Ireland are vitally concerned. Sir, it is true, as has been stated by the hon. Member for Kilkenny (Mr. P. S. Butler), that at four o'clock to-day I received a requisition from three or four and thirty Members of both Houses of Parliament, all gentlemen from Ireland, requesting that I would postpone my Motion for the second reading of this Bill to some future day. I confess, Sir, with my feelings, that that proposition gave me the deepest pain, inasmuch as I am deeply impressed with the conviction that there has been no measure proposed by Her Majesty's Ministers for the immediate relief to the people of Ireland, for immediate relief to the burdened finances of this country, that can come into comparison with that which, on behalf of my party, it has been my honour to introduce to the House. But, Sir, though such were my feelings, I was prepared, at the united request of the Irish Gentlemen, to forego my own wishes, and so were my Friends, though many of them had been summoned here—my English and Scotch Friends—from the furthest corners of England and Scotland, and from foreign parts, to support this Motion. Though some of them, I say, had come from foreign parts, still I felt there was not a man among them who, from the warm sympathy he felt with the calamities of Ireland, at this present time, would for a moment have weighed his convenience against the convenience of the Irish people. And, therefore, when I was told there had been a meeting at the Foreign Office, at which a notice had been given by the noble Lord at the head of the Government, that he intended to stake the existence of the Government upon this measure; and when the Irish Gentlemen told me that great inconvenience would arise to Ireland if the measures for the temporary relief of the destitute poor, and the other measures of Her Majesty's Ministers, were to be indefinitely postponed by a change of Government, I was prepared for a short time to postpone my Motion for the second reading of this Bill. Sir, I must say again that I have heard with the deepest regret the announcement from the First Minister of the Crown, that the fate of the Government must be staked upon this measure. Sir, upon the first day of the Session, Her Majesty charged us that it would be our duty "to consider what measures would be required to alleviate the existing distress in Ireland;" further, Her Majesty told us She had likewise to direct our earnest consideration to the permanent condition of Ireland; and Her Majesty was graciously pleased to say to us—

> "You will perceive in the absence of political excitement an opportunity for taking a dispassionate survey of the social evils which afflict that part of the United Kingdom."

In humble obedience to Her Majesty's commands, I did hope that the same impartial consideration would be given by Her Majesty's Ministers to any measures proceeding from this side of the House, which we have shown so warm a wish to bestow upon the measures of my noble Friend. That wish has not been shown in public alone. In private I have staked my honour to my noble Friend, that neither I nor any of my party have the smallest desire to make any measures connected with Ireland the battle-field of party. I am here to-night again to repeat that assurance to my noble Friend and to the country; and my right hon. Friend the Lord Mayor of York is ready to offer his still more valuable assistance, without fee or reward from Her Majesty's Government, in carrying those measures into execution. I did, therefore, hope that we might have come to the consideration of this question with all party and political feelings merged. But, Sir, since I am challenged by the First Minister of the Crown—willing as I am to pay attention to the requests of Gentlemen from Ireland, I feel that when the Queen's Minister, who is responsible for the safety of the country, tells me that it is for the advantage of that country that this measure should be forthwith discussed, and speedily decided, I feel I should be wanting in duty to Her Majesty, as well as to my country, if I were to hesitate in persevering now with my Motion. And, Sir, whatever may be the result, however important the consequences, upon my head is not the responsibility. Should it be the pleasure of Her Majesty's Ministers, in the present difficulties of Ireland, to desert the helm of State, great as I admit those difficulties to be—greater than any which any previous Government has ever encountered in the conduct of the affairs of Ireland—my Friends are not appalled at those difficulties, and will not shrink from any responsibility which, unsought, may be forced upon us.

MR. ROEBUCK said, he was not very often in the habit of supporting any proposition that came from the Treasury Bench. He did not, however, like to see what he thought an injustice done on any occasion; and he thought that unless some Members not connected with Ireland expressed their feelings, very unfair impressions might go abroad as to the present condition of Her Majesty's Government. The noble Lord opposite had endeavoured to fix upon the noble Lord at the head of the Government the imputation of making this what he called a party question. A simple statement, he was sure, would carry conviction to the mind of the noble Lord opposite, that the noble Lord at the head of the Government could do nothing but that which he had done. The noble Lord (Lord G. Bentinck) said, that at the commencement of the Session, he told his noble Friend (Lord J. Russell) he did not wish to make Ireland the battle-field of party. But he had since placed on the Table of the House a measure which, if carried, must materially affect the financial position of the country. Supposing this measure to be successful, was not the noble Lord called upon, in justice to himself, to say whether he would bear the responsibility of it, added to, and superinduced upon, and overbearing his own. The noble Lord merely said, "If the House of Commons pass this Bill, all I can reply is, it is not my act, and I will not be burdened with the responsibility of carrying it into effect." Was this making it a party question? What was the meaning and feeling of responsibility, if the noble Lord had not taken a correct and common-sense view of it? He (Mr. Roebuck) would tell the noble Lord the Member for Lynn, that if there ever was a person who ought to be accused of making this a party question, it was the noble Lord himself, and those who concurred with him. The noble Lord the Member for Newark (Lord J. Manners) had made some very significant statements upon this very question: whenever he had the opportunity, he had appealed to the Gentlemen from Ireland. "It is not we," he said, "that are opposed to the progress of Ireland." He did the same as to the Factory Act. He had distinctly stated—

> "My noble Friend and myself, and all who follow him, are determined to bring this matter to an issue; we will press it upon the House of Commons."

And, turning to the noble Lord, he continued—

> "If a majority of this House decide to carry this Bill, he will not interpose the prerogative of the Crown to stop the decision."

The noble Lord, however, said, he would not be responsible for the measure if it were carried; and that was a wise determination. It was not, then, to be "a party question," but a question of mere "convenience" to Irish Members. What was the meaning of "convenience" to Irish Members? There were two or three measures upon the Table affecting Irish landlords; and the "convenience" of Gentlemen from Ireland signified the convenience of that party. "Give us," they said, "as much as you can from your side of the House (the Ministerial), and when we have squeezed you dry, bring in the plan of the noble Lord, and give us something more." He would not mince phrases. The House had been told all sorts of strange things by the hon. Member for Meath (Mr. Grattan), as regarded the way in which England had dealt with Ireland. When the time arrived for that discussion, there should be no misapprehension—there should be no soothing phrases. If they were to speak the truth, the truth should be spoken. Let the House go into the discussion of this Bill. But the hon. Member behind him (Mr. P. Butler) had let out the secret. This measure, which was said to be for the immediate relief of the poor of Ireland, was to be delayed for the "convenience" of Irish Members. "For God's sake," exclaimed the hon. Member for Limerick (Mr. S. O'Brien), "do not bring this Bill in tonight, because some of us shall be forced, in strict conformity with our notions of duty, to support the Government." ["No, no!"] Yes, yes! There was a split in the camp at the solemn conclave; it was dangerous; and the hon. Member for Limerick was put forward as a stop-gap to give the noble Lord the Member for Lynn a plausible pretence for not bringing on the question. Let him, however, say one word for England. Here we had a "great party." The noble Lord (Lord G. Bentinck) called it "my party." This "great party" had been called from all the four quarters of the globe, he supposed, paying no regard to personal convenience, not for English convenience, but for Irish "convenience." They had been called together to agitate the question of this Bill, which materially affected the whole financial and mercantile interests of the country. He therefore said, as one who felt an interest in the well-being of his country, it was the duty of the noble Lord (Lord G. Bentinck) to bring this question to an immediate issue; and he was glad that, in spite of Irish "convenience," the noble Lord had been forced to bring it to an immediate conclusion.

Order of the day read, and

Lord G. Bentinck, amidst calls to "go on," and, for the Chancellor of the Exchequer, moved, that the Bill be read a second time to-morrow.

Lord J. Russell, as he had already stated, was quite ready to give the noble Lord precedence to-morrow, upon the understanding that no objection was made to the third reading of the Relief of Destitute Persons Bill.

Second reading deferred till the following day.

DISTILLING FROM SUGAR BILL.

The Distilling from Sugar Bill was reported.

Mr. Moffatt proposed the addition of a proviso, to follow Clause 10:—

> "That it shall be Lawful for distillers to warehouse, for home consumption, Spirits distilled from Sugar, without payment of the Duty of Excise."

The clause was mainly grounded on the allegation of the right hon. Gentleman the Chancellor of the Exchequer, who had stated that it was his desire to place the manufacturer of colonial and British spirits upon precisely the same footing. His object was, to permit spirits distilled in Scotland and Ireland to be bonded in England. The Bill, as it at present stood, would be a perfect nonentity.

Clause read a first time. On the question that it be read a second time,

The Chancellor of the Exchequer said, he must resist the Motion, as unfair to the distiller of grain. It was calculated to give an advantage to the distiller of sugar, to which he (the Chancellor of the Exchequer) did not think he was entitled.

MR. HUME wished to ask the right hon. Gentleman whether he intended in any other Bill to place the spirits distilled in Ireland and Scotland on the same footing as spirits distilled in Jamaica? The latter was allowed to be bonded in this country; the former was not—why this inequality?

The CHANCELLOR OF THE EXCHEQUER said, the present Bill, which was the only question before the House, was intended to place upon the same footing spirits distilled from grain and spirits distilled from sugar. It did not embrace the point alluded to by the hon. Member.

MR. GOULBURN said, at another time the question of the hon. Member might afford subject for discussion; but at present it had nothing whatever to do with the matter before the House.

Clause withdrawn.

Bill to be read a third time.

A STRANGER IN THE HOUSE.

Mr. CLEMENSTON, the deputy serjeant, advanced to the Table of the House, and announced that having found a stranger in the Members' gallery, he had, in accordance with the Standing Orders of the House, taken him into custody.

MR. JAMES stated, that the gentleman who had been taken into custody was a personal friend of his own. He was unacquainted with the numerous passages in and about that part of the House, and having been misdirected by a policeman, he had unfortunately stumbled into the Members' gallery. The occurrence was quite accidental, and he begged to move that he be discharged out of custody.

An HON. MEMBER seconded the Motion, and it was at once agreed to.

The following is the Officer's record of the transaction:—

> "The Serjeant at Arms attending this House, informed the House, that he had taken into his custody Charles Francis Alder, a stranger, whom he found in the Gallery appropriated to the Members of this House;
>
> "And a Member present having stated, that he was acquainted with Mr. Alder, and that, in consequence of misdirection, Mr. Alder had entered the part of the House appropriated to the Members, and that he was sorry that he had transgressed the rules of the House;
>
> "*Ordered*—That the said Charles Francis Alder be discharged out of the custody of the Serjeant at Arms attending this House."

The House adjourned at a few minutes past Eleven o'clock.

HOUSE OF LORDS,

Friday, February 12, 1847.

MINUTES.] PUBLIC BILLS.—1ª Destitute Persons (Ireland); Brewing from Sugar.

PETITIONS PRESENTED. By Lord Walsingham, from South Elmsall, and several other places, for the Repeal of the Poor Removal Act.—By Lord Monteagle, from Limerick, against the Collection of Ministers' Money (Ireland).—From Wexford, for the formation of Seed Depôts by the Government, and for ensuring a proper Supply of Food to the People of Ireland.

THE LABOUR-RATE (IRELAND) ACT—DIVISION OF BARONIES.

LORD MONTEAGLE moved for copies of applications made to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland on behalf of residents in the baronies of Clanwellin and Shanid, praying for the division of those baronies for the purpose of holding special sessions under the 9th and 10th Vict., cap. 107. In making a few observations in reference to this Motion, he should carefully abstain from any attack on the Irish Government for the decision they came to, in refusing to accede to the request, being satisfied that they decided as they thought best. Some of the baronies in Ireland being extremely large, it would be recollected that by the Labour-rate Act a power was reserved to the Government of dividing them. In the two cases to which his Motion referred, application was made to the Irish Government for the division of the baronies; but the application was not complied with. He called for these papers for the purpose of laying a foundation to present to their Lordships hereafter a proposition, on which he thought that the future well-being of Ireland depended; for, whatever system of poor-law assessment it might please Parliament to adopt for that country, it would be desirable to look well to the nature of the districts which should be combined together for the purpose of assessment, and particularly to the extent of the several districts over which the assessment was to be spread. If the districts were made too large, the ratepayers would be exposed to all sorts of fraudulent applications; and, from his experience of the operation of the Labour-rate Act, he could say that in the larger districts the works were ill administered, while in the smaller they were comparatively well administered. According to the existing poor law in Ireland, the electoral districts were chosen, which were of that convenient size that the result was, that in those districts where estates were well managed, and landlords discharged the duties belonging to their station, the rates were reduced. It was of great importance that this principle should be firmly adhered to. Their Lordships would be called on to discuss this question in connexion with measures to be brought under their consideration; and they might be told that the clauses relating to this matter were money clauses, and could not be altered without affecting the privileges of the House of Commons. He did not think that in reference to so essential a matter as this, that argument ought to prevent their Lordships from discussing and deciding on it. He, therefore, took this early opportunity of representing the great importance which the resident gentlemen of Ireland attached to the electoral districts' clause, which was called "the Duke of Wellington's Clause," because it was adopted at the noble Duke's suggestion. It would be fatal to depart from its principle; and therefore, privilege or no privilege, he trusted, if any proposition involving any serious departure from the principle of that clause were made, that their Lordships would not decline to give it due consideration, and deal with it according to their judgment. He disliked referring in one House of Parliament to what took place in the other; but it had been stated elsewhere, in reference to his opinions, that because he contended that there ought not to be a common rating over enormous districts, he therefore agreed that that rating should be assimilated to that of England. The two propositions were totally distinct, and the one so erroneously attributed to him, he had never maintained.

The MARQUESS of LANSDOWNE observed, that his noble Friend, in moving for these papers, had distinctly disclaimed the intention of casting any imputation upon the conduct of the Irish Government; but even had the noble Lord felt it his duty to call in question the acts of that Government, he (the Marquess of Lansdowne) would still have thought it fitting that these papers should be laid before the House. He would, however, suggest to his noble Friend, that in addition to the papers referred to in his Motion, he should move for copies of the Lord Lieutenant's answers to the applications.

LORD BROUGHAM considered it most important that these papers should be produced. He entertained a very strong opinion in favour of what was commonly called "the Duke of Wellington's Clause." He must say that it was intolerable to think that any notion of the privileges of the other House, should stand in the way of the fullest and most unfettered discussion in that place; and that their Lordships should be told, "You must either swallow the whole, or reject the whole," when it would very likely be as great an evil to reject the whole measure, as to adopt it without some modifications. His reason for saying this was, that the difference of the rating principle might entirely change the character of the measure. He must observe that he strongly approved of the plan adopted in Scotland to prevent abuse in the relief of the poor. In that country twenty-three questions were put to applicants for relief, with reference to their circumstances and situation, before relief was granted to them; and such applicants were also called upon to give an undertaking that if they afterwards became possessed of property beyond what was absolutely necessary for their subsistence, they would repay the money which had been advanced for their relief. He (Lord Brougham) objected, however, to the 17th of this series of questions, which required the applicant to state what place of worship he had attended during his residence in the parish; whether he had been a communicant, and, if so, with what religious denomination; and to produce a certificate of character from his minister. He (Lord Brougham) did not object to calling for the character of the applicant, but he thought the other part of the question most objectionable; for no sectarian feeling ought to be indulged with reference to the distribution of parochial charity. The regulation induced the suspicion that a person might be refused relief on account of his religious opinions; and he (Lord Brougham) was acquainted with a case in which relief had actually been refused to a Roman Catholic. There ought to be no such sectarian interference: such feelings were all very well in their place, but they had nothing to do with a question of charity. He might take this opportunity of observing, that while no one could feel more strongly than he did the importance of Sabbath rest, and of avoiding secular amusements on that day, he thought that a most imprudent course was taken by some persons in Scotland to enforce the strict observance of the Sunday. He had been informed that, at Glasgow, a medical gentleman was positively refused a train on the Sunday in order to attend one of his patients who was in a critical state. His (Lord Brougham's) deliberate opinion was, that the very persons who did most to desecrate the Sabbath, were those who made its observance unpopular by acts of this kind.

Earl FITZWILLIAM considered it most important that, in any division they might make for the purpose of rating in Ireland, care should be taken not to deprive the landed proprietors and the real substantial occupiers of the soil of an interest in administering the rates well; prior to which it was necessary that they should administer their estates well. There was one circumstance with reference to the Irish poor law, which seemed to him to be of the greatest possible consequence—namely, the mode in which the town paupers were to be dealt with; whether thay were to be thrown exclusively upon the single electoral district in which the town was situated, or to be spread over a larger surface. He was sure their Lordships would agree with him that it was most desirable they should not act in such a manner as to sanction the principle that there was a distinction between the interests of town and country. The interests of the two ought undoubtedly to be so dealt with as to be rendered as far as possible one and the same. He would have felt more gratified if his noble Friend the President of the Council (the Marquess of Lansdowne) had distinctly expressed an opinion that that House should deal in a free and unfettered manner with the measure to which reference had been made. He was sure his noble Friend would forgive him for saying that all persons connected with Ireland would have heard the noble Marquess's statement with greater satisfaction, had he expressed a decided opinion that, however the House of Commons might send up that measure, their Lordships must deal with it in accordance with those views which they believed would be most conducive to the welfare of Ireland.

Motion, as amended, agreed to. Returns ordered.

THE PARISH OF MANCHESTER.

The Marquess of LANSDOWNE said, that in consequence of a statement made by the noble Lord (Lord Stanley) on a recent occasion, in presenting a petition from the churchwardens of Manchester, the Dean of Manchester considered that an opinion had gone abroad extremely detrimental to his character, and that an imputation had been cast upon him, not perhaps for neglecting to discharge a legal duty, but, at all events, for the neglect of a moral duty. The dean had accordingly written a letter, which he had requested him to read to the House, for the purpose of removing the stigma which attached to his conduct after the statement made by the noble Lord. The letter was as follows:—

"My dear Lord—Having read the report in *The Times* of that which was stated by Lord Stanley in the House of Lords, on the presentation of a petition from the three churchwardens of Manchester, I find that one point in the petition, which is unfounded, but much relied upon by his Lordship, had been overlooked by me, and that he seems disposed, upon that ground, to cast on the chapter the heavy reproach of a violation of moral duties, though neither he nor the petitioners can charge them with any violation of the law. That point is an assertion absolutely false, that 'it was arranged that, of the whole income of the college, the warden was to have two shares, each fellow one, and each chaplain one-half, or, at that time, 70*l.*, 35*l.*, and 17*l.* 10*s.* respectively;' from which he draws a conclusion that the fines imposed were intended to amount to more than half the entire income. If that were true, the position of the chaplains would have immeasurably exceeded that of the members of the chapter, for there is a reservation of all their fees and rights to the chaplains. But there is no such allotment of a share to them, and these fixed stipends had no reference to the ultimate and entire funds of the college. It appears that by misrule the property had been leased out on fines, so that it possessed little besides reversionary interests; and the chapter were ordered in the first instance to take what they were then actually receiving, however small the funds might be, '*ex collegii fructibus et redditibus tantis seu tantillis quantum eidem nunc annuatim accrescunt*;' but, when the income should be increased by reversions, they should take the special stipends mentioned, of 70*l.*, 35*l.*, and 17*l.* 10*s.* But, after that, the charter proceeds to will, that out of the increased funds of the college, the warden should take two shares, and each of the fellows one, without limitation; but with a proviso that the choir, which was fallen into decay, should be first repaired in a suitable manner, and houses provided for their accommodation, the stipend being the sum which they had a right to take in the first instance, that is, before applying any portion of the funds to those purposes; after the completion of which, they were to divide the annual income—two-sixths to the warden, and one to each fellow. It is, therefore, certain that the original intention was not to proportion the fine to the increasing revenues, but to limit the fines to a fixed amount, while the expectation of a future increase of the funds to be enjoyed by the chapter was expressly avowed; nor do these funds arise mainly out of rectorial tithes, but out of the especial endowments of the college also. The charter did not enforce, as asserted, and did not intend to enforce, by the forfeiture of half their income when it should be increased, the constant presence of all the members of the chapter, except as specially allowed, without penalty. The complaint set forth was, that successive wardens had entirely absented themselves, and performed no duty whatsoever. I should be strictly discharging the real intentions of the charter if I were to permit and direct one or two of the canons to abide without paying any fines during all this Session of Parliament in London, for the purpose of striving that the chapter should take no detriment from this hostile petition to the House of Lords; but I think it unnecessary, though in the reign of Charles the First it would probably have been thought expedient. No abuse has crept in by lapse of time. It was intended from the first that the warden and fellows should hold other preferment, and the days of absence were not to enable them to perform duties elsewhere, but to attend to their private affairs, '*dum necessaria sibi obit negotia.*' The very first warden after the charter was rector of Ashton; and most of the wardens, and, I believe, of the fellows, in succession, have held preferment with their stalls. The present canons, before the late acceptance of St. Bees, were almost the first who, having no other preferment, have made Manchester their usual place of residence; and, in fact, it is not neglect of duty, but the increased attention of the chapter to the wants of the population of Manchester, that has suggested this bitterly-worded and grossly inaccurate petition against them.

"Considering that Lord Stanley is reported, I would fain hope incorrectly, to have charged us with a violation of moral duty, I hope that the House of Lords will favour me by permitting this letter to be read in their presence.—I remain, my dear Lord, yours faithfully,

"W. Herbert.

"Manchester, Feb. 11, 1847.

"P.S.—The fifth warden held the wardenship with the bishoprick of Chester."

Lord STANLEY said, he would not quarrel with the latitude taken by the noble Marquess in reading this letter, although he thought it was hardly regular to read a letter of such a description, referring to a former statement made in their Lordships' House. Still, as this was a personal question, he was willing to allow every opportunity for explanation. He was sorry that the statement he had made should hurt the feelings of the dean and canons of Manchester. He had the honour of a slight acquaintance with the dean, and none whatever with any other member of the chapter, or with the churchwardens, whose petition he had presented. But he must be permitted to say, that upon the statement read by the noble Marquess, the case was left precisely where it was always his intention to leave it, viz., upon the point of the non-fulfilment of a moral duty. What he had said was, that from the time of the earliest charters downwards, complaints of non-residence had always been made, and that it was the object of the founder to secure the continued residence of the warden and fellows, for the breach of which regulation some of the charters were forfeited. There could, therefore, be no doubt that it was the intention of the founder that there should be residence. The noble Marquess made his (Lord Stanley's) case stronger than he supposed it to be, because it appeared that when the fines for non-residence were imposed, the revenues of the body were lower than he imagined. When the fines were first imposed, they amounted to more than one-half of the income of the college, and there was, therefore, a sufficient restriction upon non-residence. At that time, the warden was to have 70*l.*, the fellows 35*l.* each, and the chaplains 17*l.* 10*s.* a year each. But now, when the increased income of some of these gentlemen amounted to 1,000*l.* or 800*l.* a year, the fine became an absolute nullity. It was now asserted that these were not rectorial tithes, but chapter tithes, and that question deserved inquiry. But the points which still remained manifest were, that it was intended the dean and chapter of Manchester should reside; that they did not reside; and that they violated, not only the intention of the founder, but also the moral duty which devolved upon them with reference to the population of Manchester. They had avoided the legal responsibility, and they had not fulfilled the moral obligation which had devolved upon them. One word with regard to the statement that the petition had been agreed to at a meeting attended by six persons only. He had some communication on this subject with the parties by letter, before he left the country. He had been consulted on the prudence of convening a public meeting by advertisement; and it was suggested to him that if that course were followed, it might lead to much violence and ill-feeling. He had replied that he thought it would be a wise and judicious course to abstain from calling a public meeting, and he represented that the churchwardens were charged with the welfare of the parish, and that he thought under the circumstances they would exercise a wise discretion if they did not call a meeting of that description. The dean would, therefore, probably find himself mistaken in supposing that the churchwardens had held a public meeting. The dean stated that he should hold himself warranted if he sent two of the canons to watch the proceedings of Parliament. For himself, he (Lord Stanley) thought the question of so much importance, as affecting the spiritual interests of a large population, that if their Lordships were of opinion that a Committee of that House should be appointed to consider the expediency of altering the law, and of imposing more stringent restrictions upon the canons in respect of residence, he should be prepared to vote for such a Committee; or, if necessary, he would himself move for the appointment of such a Committee.

Lord BROUGHAM would observe that in the place of the dean and chapter appointing two of the canons to watch over the proceedings of their Lordships' House, they had better appoint them to watch over their own. He would strongly recommend these reverend persons to fulfil the obligations of their office, and to reside. They had all sworn to reside, and they ought to know that they could not escape from the obligation of an oath by paying the penalty prescribed for breaking it.

Lord CAMPBELL said, that as this was not a question of a political character, and as it was an open question, he begged to remark that he adhered to the opinion he had expressed on a former occasion. The question was, whether the will and the intention of the donor or the founder ought not to be obeyed. He gave each of the canons sixty days on which they might be absent, and the warden eighty; and nothing could more strongly express his intention that they should not absent themselves for a longer period. There was no ground for the allegations that the payment of the penalty was a sufficient excuse for non-residence. A court of law would compel the performance of a covenant, although a penalty might attach to the non-performance, and the courts of equity held that there must be a specific performance of a contract, and that a party could not get off by paying the penalty. The Lord Chancellor would compel him specifically to perform the contract.

BREWING FROM SUGAR BILL.

The Earl of CLARENDON moved the First Reading of this Bill.

Lord STANLEY said, he apprehended there would be no opposition to the second reading of this Bill; but he hoped the Government would, in this case and in that of the Sugar in Distilleries Bill, refer those Bills to Select Committees up-stairs; not that it was desired to interpose unnecessary delay, but that the distillers and others interested might have an opportunity of fully stating their case, and that the figures and calculations might be gone into more fully than they could be in Committee in that House. He thought it very possible that such an investigation might prove that this Bill would be very likely to be nugatory, for that the introduction of sugar into breweries would not take place except when the price of sugar was lower and the price of barley and malt higher than they were at present.

Bill read 1^a.

House adjourned.

HOUSE OF COMMONS,

Friday, February 12, 1847.

Minutes.] Public Bills.—1° Poor Rates (Ireland).
2° Landed Property (Ireland).
3° and passed:—Destitute Persons (Ireland); Distilling from Sugar.

Petitions Presented. By Sir W. Clay, from Bethnal Green, Mr. Dennistoun, from Glasgow, and Mr. M. Philips, from Manchester, for Alteration of Law respecting the Registration of Voters.—By Mr. Watson, from Cambridge, for Inquiry respecting the same.—By Dr. Bowring, from Inhabitants of the Islands of Malta, and Gozo, for a National Representative Council in those Islands.—By Mr. M. Gibson, from Josiah Dearden, of Manchester, for Abolition of Duty on Apprentices' Indentures.—By Mr. Evans, from Attorneys and Solicitors of Chesterfield, for Repeal of the Stamp Duty on Attorneys' Certificates.—By Mr. M. Gibson, from the Chamber of Commerce, Manchester, for Repeal of the Duty on Copper Ores.—By Mr. P. Howard, from the Liverpool Steam Navigation Company, and Shipowners of St. Ives, Cornwall, for carrying into effect the Recommendations of the Select Committee respecting Lighthouses.—By Mr. Chute, from the Board of Guardians of the Freebridge Lynn Union, for Rating the Owners in Lieu of the Occupiers of Tenements.—By Sir H. Douglas, from East India and China Association of Liverpool, for Reduction of the Duty on Tea.—By Mr. Williams, from Lampeter (Cardigan), respecting the Use of the Welsh Language in the County Courts of Wales.—By Sir Robert Peel, from Galashiels, against the Factories Bill.—By Viscount Newry and Morne, from Poor Law Guardians of Newry, for Relief of the Destitute Poor in Ireland.—By Mr. Mitcalfe, from Tynemouth, against the Repeal of the Navigation Laws.—By Mr. Bankes, and other Hon. Members, from several places, for Repeal or Alteration of the Poor Removal Act.—By Mr. Bright, from Chairman of a Public Meeting convened at the National Hall, Holborn, for Abolition of the Punishment of Death.—By Colonel Conolly, from several places in Irelond, in Favour of the Railways (Ireland) Bill.—By Mr. Mitcalfe, from Tynemouth, for the Prevention of Smoke.—By Mr. Cabbell, from Inhabitants of Chishill, for referring Disputes respecting War to Arbitration.

FAMINE IN IRELAND.

Mr. SMITH O'BRIEN begged to ask the right hon. Gentleman the Secretary for Ireland, whether his attention had been called to the circumstance, that not less than fifteen coroners' inquests had been held in Bantry upon persons whose death was attributed to starvation, while in Killybegs not less than forty persons had fallen victims to famine?

Mr. LABOUCHERE: The state of destitution in that part of Ireland is most severe; and I am afraid many instances have occurred of the loss of human life in consequence.

Mr. SMITH O'BRIEN: Are there no

measures of immediate relief applicable to such cases?

Mr. LABOUCHERE: I have no doubt the attention of the Irish Government has been specially called to the subject. In writing a few days ago to the Under Secretary for Ireland, I adverted to it; but have no doubt that, without any such suggestion, the attention of the Irish Government has been directed to what is going on.

FRANCE—DIPLOMATIC RELATIONS.

Mr. ROEBUCK wished to call the attention of the noble Lord the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs to a matter which, he was sure, had not come under the notice of the noble Lord, as it related to a document which had appeared only in the *Morning Chronicle* that morning. He referred to a despatch, dated February 11, bearing to be signed by Lord Palmerston, and addressed to Lord Normanby, and relating to the diplomatic question with the French Government. It was not his purpose to notice the matter of that despatch, but he wished simply to call attention to the fact, that a despatch had appeared in a newspaper which had been sent yesterday from the Foreign Office, according to the account of the newspaper itself; before Lord Normanby could have received it; and before its contents could have been communicated, according to the forms of diplomacy, to the Court for which it was intended, it appeared in a public journal, thereby contravening the rules of ordinary diplomatic relations, and also the constitutional principle on which he now made his demand; namely, that there ought to be no communication to the newspapers of such despatches before their official communication to both Houses of Parliament. He was bound to make this statement the more, believing and feeling as he did, on a perusal of the papers laid on the Table of the House, that the conduct of the diplomatic agents and the good faith of the country had been completely vindicated hitherto by the publication of the papers produced. And, therefore, while he agreed in the conclusion the noble Lord had drawn, though that was not the question now, and believed that the good faith, honour, and candour of this country had been thoroughly preserved by the noble Lord, he must be permitted to express his regret that anything should arise to give umbrage to such a nation as France. It was with the greatest possible respect for the noble Lord, that he put the question whether the noble Lord had any cognizance of such a document being communicated to a public journal?

Viscount PALMERSTON: It is very natural that the hon. and learned Gentleman should ask the question. Perhaps the hon. and learned Gentleman did not watch very narrowly the proceedings which took place in this House yesterday. But the fact is, I laid, yesterday, upon the Table of the House, a continuation of the correspondence which had previously been placed in the hands of Members on the subject of the Spanish marriages. It contained the last despatch of M. Guizot to the Count de Ste. Aulaire, which had been communicated to Her Majesty's Government, and a despatch from myself to Lord Normanby, stating that there was no intention to reply to that despatch, Her Majesty's Government thinking their case had been fully stated on that subject. I have to return my thanks to the hon. and learned Gentleman for the kind and handsome terms in which he has spoken of the manner in which the correspondence of Her Majesty's Government has been conducted in those despatches. It contained also a despatch from Lord Normanby, complaining of the inferences which might be drawn from certain statements made in the French Chamber; and it contained also my answer to the Marquess of Normanby, assuring him that the confidence of Her Majesty's Government in him was not in any degree shaken by anything that had passed. These papers were presented only yesterday, and got into the newspapers in the ordinary way. I am sorry that, by some accident, the general delivery of the papers should have been delayed; but I beg to tender the hon. and learned Member my own copy. Had the learned Gentleman referred to a particular portion of "the Votes," he would have seen that the papers had been presented, and were accessible to all the Members.

DESTITUTE PERSONS (IRELAND) BILL.

Mr. LABOUCHERE moved the Order of the Day for the Third Reading of the Destitute Persons (Ireland) Bill.

Mr. F. FRENCH wished to take that opportunity of directing the attention of Her Majesty's Government to the spread of fever in Ireland within the last month, and of inquiring what steps they intended to take under the circumstances?

Mr. LABOUCHERE observed, that

the statement of his hon. Friend was quite correct. Within the last month, there had been a most lamentable increase of fever in Ireland. The noble Lord the Member for Falkirk (the Earl of Lincoln) had, on a former occasion, adverted to the powers given by an Act passed last year for constituting a fever board for Ireland. That board had now been revived, and had been, for a fortnight or three weeks, in constant communication with the Lord Lieutenant. The whole question had been anxiously and narrowly watched; but all he could state at present, in reference to the spread of disease in Ireland, was, that the Government were prepared to undertake such measures as should most effectually meet the difficulty.

Bill read a third time and passed.

RAILWAYS (IRELAND).

LORD G. BENTINCK moved the Order of the Day for the Second Reading of the Railways (Ireland) Bill.

The CHANCELLOR OF THE EXCHEQUER said: Before I go into the question which is to be the subject of discussion this evening, I wish to say a word or two with reference to what passed yesterday, because it is impossible to overstate the importance of the absence of party feeling in speaking of Ireland at the present moment. Every person who has listened to a debate on the subject of Ireland, must be aware that there are ingredients in it which occasionally lead to some bitterness of feeling; but I am quite sure that the noble Lord opposite, and every Member of this House, must feel the exceeding importance of avoiding, as far as possible, in the present state of that country, anything of this kind. There were, I am sorry to say, some symptoms of party feeling in the observations of one or two Gentlemen on the other side of the House last night; but nevertheless I am ready to believe that the noble Lord opposite is as anxious as myself to abstain from any expression which would give the slightest appearance of a party object to the present question. I can assure the noble Lord that such are the feelings of Her Majesty's Government. My noble Friend did think it necessary to say, and I am sure that the noble Lord opposite will not say he was not right in declaring, that if this measure was carried, he would not be responsible for carrying it out. There are, no doubt, some questions on which it is quite right that the Government should be guided by the decisions of the House of Commons; but on a question of this importance, it is perfectly impossible to do otherwise than either to give a decided opposition to it, or to adopt it at once. The noble Lord opposite stated that it was a measure of a comprehensive character for rescuing Ireland from her present distress. He stated that he brought it forward as a plan which he hoped the Government would adopt, and by which, for the purpose of executing railroads in Ireland, advances were to be made from the public funds to the extent of not less than 16,000,000*l.* [Lord G. BENTINCK: Not more than 16,000,000*l.*] Well, of not more than 16,000,000*l.* Now, whatever may be done in smaller matters, I think that even the noble Lord himself will not say that in a measure of this description the Government could do otherwise than either adopt it, or resist it altogether. There were some observations made last night tending to show that the whole question of to-night was merely a question of the principle of assisting, in some degree, some of the railroads in Ireland. When pared down in this way, the proposal necessarily loses a great deal of the value which the noble Lord attaches to it as a comprehensive measure; and it is with the measure in its entire character, and in this shape alone, that it is for me to deal. Now, taking it as a measure of this importance, if my noble Friend (Lord J. Russell) had allowed the debate to go on, saying nothing of the course he intended to take, should the decision go against him, I think he would not have acted fairly by this House. I consider, therefore, that he took the most straightforward, honest, and manly course, in having stated at once what his intention was, and allowing the discussion to be conducted with a full knowledge of the view which Government took of the question, and the course which they should feel it their duty to pursue. I must also state, that after the plan of the noble Lord opposite was once before the public, it became of importance that the question should be speedily settled one way or the other. I have had representations made to me within the last two or three days from many quarters, to the effect—not for the sake of the Government—not for the sake of the noble Lord opposite—but that it was indispensable for the interest of the railway companies in Ireland, for the sake of the railway companies in this country, and for the sake of the moneyed interest in both countries, that the matter should be brought to an immediate and final issue. Whatever objections may have been made to the Bill being introduced at all, yet I confess I have great satisfaction in seeing the measure in the shape of a Bill, because, however clear the statement of the noble Lord was, nevertheless it is infinitely easier and more satisfactory to judge of a measure when it has assumed the shape of a Bill, than when it is merely stated to the House; and whilst I confess that I did feel a little appalled even with the first proposal of a loan of 16,000,000*l.*, that feeling has in no degree been removed, but rather increased, by seeing the provisions of the Bill. I think in many respects they are calculated rather more to favour the shareholders of the railways, than to assist the distressed people of Ireland. I have no doubt that the noble Lord himself intends it, and thinks it calculated to relieve the distress of the people of Ireland; but I confess, when I see on the back of the Bill the name of the hon. Member the Lord Mayor of York (Mr. Hudson), who is so deeply interested in railroads; and when I see there the name of another hon. Gentleman, the Member for Westmoreland (Alderman Thompson), who is largely concerned in furnishing the materials of which railroads are made; I should have been surprised if the interest of railroad proprietors and shareholders had not been adequately considered. This, of course, affords no reason why the measure should not be fairly and fully discussed; but this I must say, that it justifies me in looking with a more critical eye to the provisions of the Bill, than I should have been disposed to if I had been considering this only as a measure to supply relief to the people of Ireland. I will concede to the noble Lord, if a concession it may be called, that the extension of railroads would be beneficial to that country. I will concede, if a concession it may be called, that in some degree, although not to the extent stated by the noble Lord, labour would be provided, under the provisions of this Bill, for destitute persons. I will concede these points to the noble Lord; but, having conceded them, I know not that much advance has been made to establish other points which I think ought to be clearly established to the satisfaction of this House—at least, they must be made out to my satisfaction, before I should feel myself justified in proposing its acceptance by the House, or, as an individual, in voting for it. I have heard nothing in the arguments which have been urged in support of this Bill to convince me that it is advantageous for the State to become a great money lender. I have heard nothing to convince me that the securities which the railroads offer are adequate and sufficient. I have heard nothing to convince me that the benefit to be derived by the destitute persons in Ireland from the provisions of this Bill, are at all commensurate with the expenditure which is proposed. Still less have I heard anything to convince me, that, in the present state of the finances of the country, and with the distress which prevails here too, as well as in Ireland, to an extent far greater than is generally apprehended—I say, I have heard nothing to convince me that I should be justified in imposing burdens on the people of this country for such a purpose. For the purpose of relieving the distress of the people of Ireland, and of preserving them from starvation and death, I would not hesitate to ask the people of this country, burdened as they are, to provide means of alleviating that dreadful calamity; but before I ask the people of this country, suffering as they themselves are under great pressure, to submit to any further burdens of this kind, at least I must be assured that the money so raised would go directly and effectually for that purpose. Now, with respect to the first point, I confess I am not of opinion that the State should become a great money lender. On the contrary, I think it would be exceedingly wrong and mischievous, except in cases of an extraordinary character, that the State should become a lender of money in competition with private capitalists. I know that the measure has made a great impression on the minds of certain Gentlemen in this House; but it appears to me that Irish distress and Irish notions on money matters, have in this case subverted all sound principles on the subject—I do not merely mean the principles of that science which has been called by some hon. Gentlemen "new and fantastical," but I doubt whether, even in those happy times to which Gentlemen opposite are so fond of alluding—in the times of feudal intercourse between landlords and peasants—such things as large loans from the public purse were so common as has been supposed. I doubt whether the feudal lords advanced money to their peasants and tenants, and whether two words, well known in the discussions which preceded the revolution in a neighbouring country, *taille* and *corvée*, were not much more familiar to the people, than loans of Exchequer-bills, or advances from the Consolidated Fund. But hon. Gentlemen have also complained that in the cases of former loans advanced from the public Exchequer, a higher rate of interest has been charged, than that at which the money was borrowed. I have said that I consider the advance of loans by the State at all, except in extreme cases, to be a positive evil; and I know not of any impartial check which can be imposed upon the system, except by imposing a higher rate of interest. If the parties have good security to offer, and if the speculation is a fair speculation, I have never known any difficulty in the way of obtaining loans from private individuals. It is only where sufficient security is not offered, or where there is some inherent weakness in the scheme, that there is usually any difficulty experienced in obtaining private loans; and it is only in extraordinary times, and under an extraordinary pressure, and for a limited time, that there is ever any necessity for having recourse to loans advanced by Government. I believe the greatest departure made from this principle was in the Bill which was passed last year authorizing the advance of loans to gentlemen for the purpose of draining their estates; and it was fortunate, so far as Scotland at least was concerned, that that measure was in existence, because in that country the proprietors, with a zeal which does them infinite credit, have availed themselves of the measure as a means of affording employment to their destitute tenantry. But that measure was an exception to the general rule; and I know not that it can be defended, except as a means of facilitating the arrangements of the landowners which were necessary after the passing of the corn law. The noble Lord has said that the Irish railroads would afford ample security. I do not wish to say anything which would depreciate the value of those undertakings in the market, or to express any decided opinion of the value of the security which they offer to the public. But when I refer to past transactions in Ireland—when I refer to the advances which have been made to public works in various districts in Ireland, I confess I am not sanguine as to the value or adequacy of the security which they offer. I believe that canals, as a means of internal communication, were at one time in the same position that railroads now are; yet when I refer to the advances which were made to various canal companies, I find that hardly one of them has paid the advances which were taken from the public treasury, or the money which was borrowed from other sources. I hardly need refer to the case of the Lagan Navigation, the affairs of which are not in such a state as to afford much prospect of the liquidation of its debt. There was another case. Very soon after I was appointed to my present office, a deputation from the Ulster Canal Company waited upon me, and represented that unless the whole debt due to Government was remitted, it would be impossible to go on. The whole estimated cost of these works was 160,000*l*., and of this there has been 130,000*l*. advanced by the public, of which there has been no payment whatever, either of principal or interest. There is another canal—the Grand Canal, which one should say was as favourably circumstanced as any public work in Ireland. Well, it is not yet three years since an Act was passed by the House, which granted, for one purpose, 40,000*l*.; for another, 38,000*l*.; and for another, 20,000*l*.; the whole sum amounting to 98,000*l*.; the Act reciting that, whereas the undertaking was utterly unable to pay either principal or interest, be it enacted that on the receipt of 10,000*l*. &c., the 98,000*l*. should be given up. I have thus shown that before the existence of railroads, when the promoters of these schemes were unable to obtain money from individuals, they applied to Government; and the result has too often been, that both principal and interest were altogether sacrificed. There were other advances made, not to the poor and impoverished districts and parts of Ireland, but to some of the largest towns and richest cities in that country. Have they been repaid? No such thing. There is now due from the city of Dublin the sum of 245,000*l*. advanced to it, and interest upon it, that is now considered quite irrecoverable. Advances were made to widen the streets of Cork, 13,000*l*. principal and 10,000*l*. interest, but no repayments have been made. The sum of 55,000*l*. has been advanced to the city of Limerick, upon which there is now due 34,000*l*. of interest, but no payments of any kind have been made on account of either principal or interest. These were advances made, not to poor and impoverished districts, but the very reverse. So that if you take advances made either to public companies for internal communication, or to the three richest towns and cities in Ireland, the same result will be found—no repayment of either principal or interest; and all the advances and the interest have been sacrificed. There is a distinction to be made in regard to advances in Ireland, and it is this. Advances to individuals and to grand juries for the purposes of road-making, &c., have been repaid; but advances to private companies for undertakings of this description, have unfortunately been sacrificed. [Lord G. Bentinck: The Dublin and Kingstown Railway.] Speaking generally, I say such advances have never been repaid. The advances to the Dublin and Kingstown Railway Company, however, have all been repaid. [*Cheers.*] Hon. Gentlemen opposite cheer loudly; but I do not think they will be able to discover any parallel between the Dublin and Kingstown Railway, a short line between the capital of Ireland and the packet station, and the lines which stretch over every part of the country. If these facts, then, are true (and I believe them to be indisputable), I think I am justified in saying that it is by no means so clear as the noble Lord supposes, that the security to be afforded by these railroads is altogether unexceptionable. But there is another objection to the proposal of the noble Lord; namely, that if it is to be considered "a great and comprehensive scheme," embracing all the railways in Ireland, it would then put the good and bad railways upon nearly the same footing. If the examination by the Railway Board which the noble Lord proposes, is to be good for anything; if they reject those schemes which they consider do not offer adequate security, I know not that the noble Lord's proposition amounts to much in the way of affording extensive employment; but if the board should pass all the schemes, then it would do a grievous injustice to solid and good concerns. I have been informed that one of the best of the lines now in the course of construction, having advanced money enough to enable them to borrow under the terms of their Act, have been for some time borrowing money at 4½ and 5 per cent. Upon the announcement of the plan of the noble Lord, by which the other railways would be able to obtain advances at 3½ per cent, the value of the shares immediately fell 1 per cent. [Lord G. Bentinck: What line was that?] The Great Southern and Western, I believe it is called. I will now state to the House what is the opinion of a gentleman I shall not name; but I will state to the House that I believe he is a very wealthy man, residing in Dublin, and in all respects as trustworthy a person and as capable of forming an opinion on the subject as any one. This gentleman says—

> "If Government were to give money at 3½ per cent to railway projects, the effect would be to render the most bankrupt concerns rich, and put them on a level with the best lines. If Government should be insane enough to yield to the cry for assistance to railways in Ireland, without stringent conditions and the most satisfactory explanations as to the proprietary and the paid-up capital, railways in Ireland will be sinks of peculation, improvidence, and abuse. A departure from the wholesome regulation which requires half the capital to be paid up before a company can borrow, would place all the ill-conceived rotten projects of this country in a flourishing condition."

As I mentioned before, when I look at this Bill, I confess that some of its provisions seem to me to look very much as if they had been introduced expressly for the purpose of meeting cases like these, in which gentlemen had been induced to advance money on speculations which had turned out bad securities for the money. If I understand the provisions of the Bill, it seems to be provided by the 29th clause, that all parties holding securities upon loans, may give notice and require the company to pay off all such securities, and that for that purpose the company may appropriate the money advanced by the State. Now, I must say, that such a course does not appear to me calculated to insure much employment to the destitute people in Ireland. Then there is the 31st clause, which provides that in the event of a company abandoning their works, they should be taken up by the State, who should be liable for all the debts and undertakings of the company. If I understand the effect of this clause, it is this: that any company which finds itself in a bankrupt and hopeless state, have nothing to do, but to throw off their connexion with the railway, and place it in the hands of the State; but if it is in a flourishing and thriving state, they may go on and receive the profits. I do not think that these are provisions peculiarly calculated to afford employment to labourers. They are, however, remarkably beneficial to railroad proprietors; and I confess, that in my opinion the measure might more properly be entitled, "A Bill for the relief of destitute shareholders," than one for the relief of destitute labourers. Why, my Colleagues and myself have had a much more tempting project than this under our consideration. Before the noble Lord's Bill was announced, a meeting of railroad shareholders was held in Dublin, from which a memorial emanated, praying that the Government would advance them a sum of money much smaller in amount than that asked for by the noble Lord; and proposing also that it should be lent upon more reasonable conditions than he stipulated for. The memorial proposed that no money should be advanced to any railway company which had not already expended 20 per cent in furtherance of their undertaking; and it was stipulated, that if the Government would advance 30 per cent to companies which had already expended 20 per cent, those companies should expend 30 per cent more—thus providing for an expenditure of 50 per cent by the shareholders, for 30 per cent advanced by the Government. That was a more reasonable proposition, and an infinitely fairer one, than that of the noble Lord. Doubtless the Irish railway shareholders were very well pleased when they saw the noble Lord come forward with a proposition that the Government should advance 16,000,000*l.*, and that the money lent to the railways should constitute two-thirds of the whole expenditure, instead of less than one-third, which was all the shareholders had ventured to ask for. We declined to entertain the proposal of the Irish railroad shareholders, and to place ourselves in the position of becoming guarantees for the advance of a considerable sum of money. We knew that we must transmit from this country to Ireland large sums of money in order to prevent actual starvation. To that extent we scrupled not to call upon the country to advance its funds; but I must hesitate—nay, I, for one, distinctly refuse—to impose any burden, or to incur the risk of imposing any burden, on the people of this country, for the mere benefit of railroad speculators in Ireland. I have said, that for the purpose of affording relief, where it can be properly given, we do not scruple to advance money; and that brings me to the consideration of the question as to the amount of relief likely to be afforded by the adoption of the noble Lord's scheme. I cannot help thinking, that there is some great error in the noble Lord's calculations upon this point. The sum which the Irish railroad shareholders wished the Government to advance was 5,000,000*l.*; that which the noble Lord proposes to advance is 16,000,000*l.*; and yet the number of labourers calculated to be employed is, as nearly as may be, the same. The noble Lord says that the 16,000,000*l.* will find employment for 110,000 men; and the railroad shareholders alleged that the 5,000,000*l.* they required would put in employment 100,000 men. Which calculation is nearest the truth, it is not for me to say; but it is extraordinary, that the noble Lord, with the command of 16,000,000*l.*, should propose to employ only a few thousand more labourers than the railroad shareholders undertook to do with 5,000,000*l.* I cannot help thinking that the noble Lord must have included in his calculation some railroads already constructed. The railroad shareholders stated, in their memorial, that the capital of the companies in whose behalf the application was made, amounted to about 16,000,000*l.* That is considerably under the amount which the noble Lord calculated. If, therefore, the noble Lord has included in his calculation the capital of railroads which are already constructed, a proportionate deduction must be made from his estimate of the number of persons to whom his scheme would give employment. The noble Lord says, that there are 1,500 miles of railroad yet to be constructed in Ireland, and that the expenditure which he proposes would furnish employment upon them for 110,000 men. I doubt whether there are as many as 1,500 miles of railroad yet to be constructed in Ireland. I do not presume, upon such a question as this, to enter into competition with the right hon. Member for Sunderland, whose knowledge of the subject probably exceeds that of any man in the House; but I have made some inquiry relative to the number of persons employed on a railway in the course of construction. I applied to a person of very considerable experience on the subject; and he informed me, that, speaking to the best of his belief, founded on considerable experience, about 25 per cent of the whole capital was the very outside of what was spent in the construction of the line. The noble Lord calculated that four years would be occupied in the completion of the Irish railways; it follows, therefore, that 25 per cent of the 16,000,000*l.* which he required, must be distributed over four years, which would give an expenditure of 1,000,000*l.* for each of the four years. Taking the wages round at 10*s.* per week, that sum would give employment to between 40,000 and 45,000 labourers, and no more. The same person from whom I obtained the information which I have just communicated to the House, also stated, that, from a number of results, it has been ascertained that the number of men employed per mile for two or three years, is from 20 to 30; I will take the number at 30, and that will give 45,000 men as the number who would be employed in the construction of 1,500 miles of railroad. It therefore appears that, subjecting the noble Lord's calculation to either of the tests which have been supplied by a person of very great practical knowledge in the construction of railroads, the number of persons who would be employed at the rate of expenditure proposed by the noble Lord, instead of 110,000, would at most be only 45,000. I think, then, that I am justified in maintaining, that the adoption of the noble Lord's scheme would by no means cause the absorption of so large an amount of labour as he anticipates. The noble Lord calculates that each labourer's family consists of five persons; and that, consequently, his measure would provide for the support of 550,000 individuals. I have shown that the number of labourers likely to be employed cannot amount to the number the noble Lord estimates. I will make a fair allowance for the information supplied to me being under the mark; but between 45,000 and 110,000 there is a large margin; and, I think, I am borne out in the assertion, that nothing like the number of labourers the noble Lord calculates upon would obtain employment. The noble Lord supposes that each labourer is the head of a family of four persons, or has four persons dependent upon him. I do not believe that any Gentleman in this House will say that that is the case with railroad labourers in general. Any one who has lived in the neighbourhood of railroads in the course of construction must know, that, generally speaking, persons employed in the construction of railroads are not family men, and do not support any persons but themselves. I believe that a considerable portion of their earnings is expended on themselves, in the good living which the noble Lord told us contributed so much to the excise revenue, and that only a small portion is appropriated to the support of families. I have no reason to suppose that the case is otherwise in Ireland. There is another consideration of still greater importance, to which I will now refer. I think I may venture to state, that persons fit to be employed as railroad labourers, are seldom to be found amongst the class who are at present in a state of destitution in Ireland. The right hon. Member for the University of Dublin told us the other day that he had been exceedingly anxious to carry out a presentment for the earthworks of a railroad under the Treasury Minute, but that he found the railroad company objected to employing the unskilled destitute labourers. The same thing has happened in other parts of the country. An hon. Gentleman now sitting behind me distinctly stated the other day, that not a single destitute person from the immediate neighbourhood was employed upon a railroad which passed near his residence in the south of Ireland. The railroad is the Waterford and Kilkenny. It appears that the contractors upon that line brought their labourers from Waterford, and other distant places; and refused to employ one of the destitute poor of the country through which the line passed. The House must remember that we have already endeavoured, unsuccessfully, to connect railroad employment with destitution. Early in October a Treasury Minute was passed, authorizing advances to be made on presentments for the earthworks of railroads. Under this Minute, advances were made to baronies from the Treasury, and the baronies proceeded to enter into arrangements with the railroad companies; but difficulties which prevented the execution of the scheme, were raised by parties on the spot. I was informed by a deputation which waited upon me, that, in the first place, but few railroad companies were in a situation to obtain possession of the land; and, in the next place, that where they had possession of the land, and the baronies were willing to present, they expected from the railroad companies repayment of the entire sum to be advanced. The railroad companies, on the other hand, alleged, that if they were to execute the works by skilled labourers, it would be done at less cost than by unskilled labourers; and that, therefore, it was unfair to call upon them to repay the entire sum which might be advanced, though they were willing to pay what it would cost them to have the work done by skilled labourers, leaving the baronies to pay the difference, in consideration of the relief which they would obtain from the employment of their distressed population. The baronies were at that moment complaining of unproductive works, in which, according to their own showing, they lost half of the whole sum expended—the Treasury losing the other half—and yet they rejected the proposition of the railroad companies, and refused to submit to the loss of paying the difference in the expense to which the companies would be put, by the employment of unskilled, as compared with skilled labourers. Now, when those parties complain that they have lost their money in unproductive works, I beg to tell them that it was their own fault. What has been done with respect to the Waterford and Limerick Railroad, furnishes another proof of the impracticability of rendering the construction of railroads in Ireland subservient to the employment of destitute labourers. In four baronies through which the Waterford and Limerick Railroad passes, presentments have been made to the amount of 78,000*l.*; arrangements were being made for the employment of destitute labourers on the works, when a letter was received from the secretary to the company, stating that they could not employ the destitute persons recommended by the Board of Works, and that it was indispensable they should be at liberty to employ such persons as they chose. Thus, the only object which it was hoped to effect by making advances of money to railroads, was unattainable. The circumstances which I have stated, show that there is great reason to doubt that the noble Lord's measure would afford employment to the destitute poor in Ireland. It may be a good measure for promoting the construction of railroads in Ireland; but I believe that it would prove utterly unavailing as a means of affording relief to the destitute. Railroad companies would consult their interest by bringing skilled labourers to their works from all parts of the country in which they could find them; whilst it was the object of the House and the Government to afford relief to destitute and unskilled labourers who were starving. I repeat, therefore, that, in my opinion, it is next to impossible to unite railroad employment with the relief of the destitute. There is another circumstance well worthy of the consideration of the House. Any person who will look at the map of Ireland, must see that the great mass of railroads in that country lie upon the east coast, running in different directions from Dublin to Cork, and from Dublin to Londonderry. Now, the danger of starvation is not so imminent on the east coast. The most wretched and helpless part of Ireland at the present moment is the west, where the cottier peasantry had been induced to plant themselves in great numbers, tempted by the opportunity of getting seaweed to aid them in the cultivation of their land. It is in that part of Ireland that distress presses with the greatest severity; and I lament to say, that there famine and death are making frightful ravages. It is obvious that the distressed population of the west would not be benefited by the adoption of a measure applicable to the opposite side of the island. It is impossible to believe that railroad companies would find it worth their while to bring unskilled labourers from a distance of 150 miles, when they could get others on the spot. But suppose that railroad companies, actuated by a feeling of humanity—to which, however, beyond a certain point they would not sacrifice the interests of the shareholders—should attempt to bring large bodies of labourers from a distance, leaving the destitute in the immediate locality unemployed, might we not expect such a proceeding to produce the fatal results which have recently flowed from a similar cause? Might we not anticipate immediate riots and attacks upon the intruding labourers, as well as on the overseers of the works? Disputes have unfortunately taken place in many parts of England, between the English and the Irish labourers; but in Ireland the disputes would assume the character of faction fights, and the labourers brought from a distance would ultimately be driven off the ground. I think I have succeeded in showing that the noble Lord's measure would not afford relief to the really destitute, even in those parts of the country through which the railroads pass, whilst on that part of the country in which relief is most needed, it could exercise no sensible influence. We are prepared to abandon the system of giving relief through employment on public works, because we believe that it causes a considerable waste in expenditure, and think that, by the new system we are about to adopt, the same amount of expenditure will go much further in affording relief. Whilst we are eschewing one system on that account, would it become us to adopt another plan, which, as I have shown from the data I have stated to the House, could furnish employment to only 45,000 men, and those not of the class we are most anxious to provide for? I know that the noble Lord's scheme charms many persons, because it seems to hold out the prospect of employment to the people. If there were no other scheme before the House, that consideration might have some weight; but when it is known that there are measures before us involving the expenditure of large sums of money for the purpose of affording employment to the people, and otherwise relieving their distresses, that argument falls to the ground. There is no reason for adopting the noble Lord's scheme in preference to fifty other schemes which might be proposed, founded simply on the advance of a large sum of money to Ireland. When we are dealing with the taxes paid by the people of this country, it becomes us to be just before we are generous, and at least to take care that the money we advance shall be beneficially employed. I say we ought to make every effort in our power to afford relief to the really destitute in Ireland. Not a day passes without our receiving accounts of the extent to which destitution has extended, and, in many instances, I have received favourable accounts of the efforts which are made to mitigate its horrors. I stated to the House, a few days since, that in Kilmoe, out of a population of 7,250, no less than 7,000 persons were reduced to a state of pauperism, and yet had been for a very considerable time supported by the voluntary exertions of the district. A few days since we received a report of the proceedings of a relief committee of a barony in the Queen's county; the subscriptions were raised by persons themselves but little removed from poverty, and with little or no assistance from the resident proprietors. The most beneficial results were produced; the whole sum raised was 176*l.*; of this, 136*l.* were subscribed by the farmers, the policemen, and the priest, and only 40*l.* were contributed by the proprietors of the soil. I have never perused a document with greater pleasure and satisfaction, for it gives strong hopes of what may be done if all classes unite their efforts, giving money if they have it, and their personal exertions if they have no money, on behalf of their distressed countrymen. By this means alone can relief be extended to the starving population. And I confess it was with pain I can scarcely describe, that I received, by the same post that brought me the above report, an account of very different proceedings in the county of Mayo. There I find, so far from subscriptions having been entered into to maintain their people, that the landlords or their agents are pursuing a system of ejectment, under processes for rent, to an extent beyond what had ever been known in the county. The number of processes entered at the quarter-sessions exceed very considerably anything they have been before. At the quarter-sessions of the barony of Ballina 6,400 processes have been entered, of which 4,000 are at the suit of the landlords for rent. The same letter further states, that—

> "These proceedings have almost depopulated the country, the people having fled with all they possessed, to prevent their property from being seized, or themselves thrown into prison, under decrees. There are districts in this barony where the townlands hitherto occupied by 400 or 500 persons are now uninhabited."

This may, account, perhaps, for some of the thousands landed on the quays of Liverpool from the Irish steamers; and if this course were to be generally pursued, I should despair of the country ever being relieved. But if the contrary course is adopted—if, as in the instance I have quoted, the example given by the poorer residents, is followed by their richer neighbours, though much suffering will be unavoidably felt, yet to a great extent it may be mitigated, and the lives of thousands may be preserved. The hon. and learned Member for Bath asked me a question the other evening, to which he and the country have a right to receive an answer. That question was as to the sum of money which would be required for the measures of relief in Ireland. To that question the hon. Member had a right to expect a reply, and before many days it will be my duty to give the answer. But I confess I was a little surprised to hear the hon. Member for Limerick call the outlay under one of those measures a profligate waste; he wished to know when this profligate expenditure would cease. Sir, as long as it preserves the destitute from perishing, I do not call that expenditure profligate; and, though many predictions have been made of failure in what we are doing, yet neither the hon. Member for Limerick, nor the hon. Member for Wycombe, who also finds fault with our measures, has hitherto pointed out any other means by which the pressure of the distress can be met. If I thought this plan of the noble Lord's, or any other that might be proposed, was a better one than ours—if I thought it would bring food to the starving people of the west of Ireland—I should not be ashamed to adopt it, from whomsoever it might come. But, believing as I do that it will not answer the purpose intended, and seeing that no other suggestion has been offered by those best acquainted with Ireland, and who have a practical knowledge of the country, I must adhere to the measures which we have proposed. I am perfectly aware that these measures of relief only will not be enough; there must be measures that will go beyond the present period of suffering. I am as perfectly convinced as any Irish Gentleman in the House, that we are on the eve of a great change, almost a revolution, in the social condition of Ireland. I entertained that opinion and expressed it as long ago as September last. I said, then, that besides measures of relief for the present distress, some of a much more enduring character would be necessary. I believe that, notwithstanding the severe suffering of the present time, much good may arise out of it, if it is properly dealt with; even the failure of the cultivation of the potato may turn out to be a blessing. Should the potato cease to be depended on as the food of the people, of course the plot of ground now so essential to the peasant, will cease to bear so great a value; land will no longer be so fiercely competed for, or held with such tenacity. Agrarian outrages will probably cease, when land will no longer be indispensable to a man's subsistence. Even the labourers who come over to England and Scotland, to work at the hay and corn harvest, did so in the confidence that their families could subsist at home on potatoes; this will be no longer the case; they can no longer subsist on food of their own raising. If advantage is properly taken of this—not according to the system practised in Mayo—we may yet transform the peasant into the peaceable, industrious labourer, working for and paid by the wages of an employer, which will be a change at once essential and beneficial to the country. But this is an exceedingly different thing from collecting the labour of Ireland into gangs working on a railroad. Numbers of Irish labourers come over periodically to Scotland and England; but what they have yet to learn is the practice of steady labour, at wages from day to day, upon the land and farms of Ireland. That is a kind of employment far more healthy, and more conducive to the establishment of a sound connexion between landlord and tenant, and farmer and labourer, than any employment on railroads; our best efforts ought to be directed to the establishment of a system of daily work and daily wages in Ireland, not upon railroads, but upon the land. For this purpose a Bill has been introduced, carrying still further the measure of last Session, advancing sums of money for the purpose of draining in Ireland; loans will be made to proprietors wishing to improve their estates. Much has been said, and very unjustly, against that Bill. I think it will be the means of inducing many persons in Ireland who have not heretofore paid sufficient attention to the improvement of their estates, to commence operations with that object. Ample security is taken for the repayment of the advances; and I believe such repayments have seldom failed in Ireland. If the landlords do avail themselves of this Bill, it will be the beginning of a better system in that country. For a short time, perhaps, labour will be employed in draining, fencing, and other operations of that kind necessary for the improvement of the estate; but, by and by, it will be employed in cultivating the soil, a larger quantity of land will be brought into tillage, a greater quantity of waste land—and by that I do not mean bogs and moors, but land now in a half-wild state—will be rendered arable, affording employment to a greater number of persons in the ordinary processes of agriculture. I do not think the State should be for ever the lender for these purposes; but if, by making these advances, the proprietors are enabled to commence operations of this description, they will afterwards be able to raise sufficient funds from private sources. But even should it be necessary to extend the advances under this Act, I believe it would be far better to do so, than to furnish money for railroads. Applied to the land, the funds would be employed in reproductive labour, increasing the produce of the soil, on which the people of Ireland subsist. That is an object of primary importance; if that is done then the country may prosper, and, ultimately, there may be a necessity for railroads; but at present I think the noble Lord is providing the means of conveyance for that which does not exist. Our first duty and our first care should be to increase the productiveness of the soil, and to foster the custom of daily employment at wages upon the land. There are other Bills of a similar description into which it is unnecessary for me to go; one of them, the Bill for the Improvement of Waste Lands, has met with some ridicule in the

House; but all of them have been framed with one object—the improvement of the land, increasing its productiveness, and adding to the quantity of human food grown upon it. To this all our efforts ought to be directed; for these purposes mainly ought advances to be made. And if I felt disposed to add to the advances for Ireland, it should be for these purposes rather than for the construction of railroads. For such purposes, and for other measures that may be necessary to carry Ireland through the crisis now hanging over her, I am prepared to call upon the people of this country to contribute, and to relieve their starving Irish brethren. I am sure the poorest man in the country will not object to contribute his share of the burden. But when I receive, day after day, accounts of distress existing in this country—even in this great metropolis—which it is most painful to hear; when I know that in many large manufacturing towns mills are stopped, and employment has ceased, and even that starvation is pressing upon thousands, we must take care not to weigh unduly on the resources of this country in order to relieve our suffering brethren in Ireland. We are prepared to propose to this House, and to call upon the people of this country, to contribute what we consider really necessary for relieving distress in Ireland. But I should be ashamed to call them to bear more burdens for an object which, though it may confer some slight benefit on the labouring class of Ireland, will not go directly or efficiently to the relief of that distress. For these reasons I feel it is impossible to accede to the Motion of the noble Lord; and I move that the Bill be read a second time this day six months.

Mr. H. J. BAILLIE rose, not for the purpose of entering into the general discussion of the Bill before the House, but in his capacity as one of the representatives of Scotland, to enter his protest against the appropriation of sixteen millions of the public money to the construction of railways in Ireland, unless the House was prepared to vote a sum for the construction of railways in Scotland also. The people of Scotland were at this moment labouring under a similar calamity to that with which the people of Ireland were afflicted; there was a starving population in many parts of that country to maintain; but because the landed proprietors of Scotland nobly performed their duty in the emergency, making unheard-of efforts to meet the evil—that country was to be left to its own resources, and no grants were to be made for the execution of public works in aid of the distress that existed. Was it fair, he would ask, to call upon those who were making great pecuniary sacrifices, in order to maintain the population, to contribute also to the construction of Irish railroads? With the permission of the House, he should shortly state the course which had been taken by the landed proprietors of Scotland, and how they had met the difficulties with which they were surrounded; because there existed no reason why the proprietors of land in Ireland should not adopt similar measures for the relief of their starving poor. And he would take the example of two landed proprietors in the county which he represented, not because all the other landlords of Scotland did not do the same as they were doing, but because he had a better opportunity of knowing the course taken by these individuals. These were the two chief proprietors of the island of Skye, Lord Macdonald and the Macleod of Macleod. The island of Skye contained 26,000 inhabitants, and the whole rental of the land was only 25,000*l.* a year. It was manifest, therefore, that at the rate at which provisions were sold at present, the rental of the island would not sustain its population for two months; and indeed, had it not been for the measures adopted by these landlords, to which he was about to refer, there was no doubt that at this moment the inhabitants of the island would be in a state of starvation. The people lived on their potato crop for about nine months in the year, and for the other three months they subsisted on their oats. Both, however, were long since consumed; and he should be glad to know any part of Ireland that was in a worse situation. Well, what was the course adopted by the landed proprietors in that emergency? In August last, they were made aware of the fact of the total failure of the potato crop; and what did they then do? They did not sit with their arms folded, but they immediately applied to Her Majesty's Government for a loan of money to set the people at work, offering their estates as a security for its repayment. The Government referred them to the Drainage Act of last Session; but they told the Government that it would not answer the exigencies of the case, because they sought to bring new land into cultivation. Then he should state that it was impossible that any Government could come forward in a better spirit than did the Government of the noble Lord upon that occasion. The Government promised to amend the Act in that respect, and the people of Skye were accordingly all set to work at once, and were now employed in draining and trenching the land of the island. Of course there were many persons in that population of six and twenty thousand who were not able to work; these had hitherto been gratuitously supported by the landlords, and up to the present time he understood little or no relief had been afforded to them by the committee in Edinburgh. He did not know whether this kind of work could be carried on until the harvest; but at all events the landlords had the signal honour of doing everything that lay within their power to meet the difficulty and avert the danger with which their tenantry were menaced. With respect to the measure of the noble Lord the Member for Lynn, he could very well understand how the right hon. the Lord Mayor of York could convince himself that railroads were a panacea for every earthly evil, social and political, because no doubt they were a fixed idea in his mind. But he confessed he felt astonished that the noble Lord should think that the people of Ireland could be fed, not by the exertions of the landlords in the cultivation of the land of that country, but by the introduction of railways. If the people of Ireland were to be fed on a better description of food than that to which they had hitherto been accustomed—and God grant they might!—it could only be by turning all their energies to the improved cultivation of the land. When there was good cultivation, there could be no doubt that railroads would be made in due time. As he said, he had only risen to protest, as a representative of Scotland, against any outlay of the public money upon railways in Ireland. If the Legislature wished to benefit Ireland, they should grant every facility to the proprietors of land for the purpose of improving their estates, taking due care that it should be all laid out upon the land, but leaving to them its distribution, as no doubt they would apply it more economically, and were the best judges of its application. By these means the expense of public works would be avoided; and, above all, there would be an avoidance of that system of jobbing which unfortunately pervaded every department in Ireland.

Mr. STUART agreed with the hon. Member for Inverness in the deserved compliments which he had paid to the landlords of Scotland; and he also agreed with the exhortation of the right hon. the Chancellor of the Exchequer, that in the discussion of the question at issue all party considerations should be avoided as much as possible. He thought, on a question which related to internal improvements which were calculated to ensure permanent benefits, that personality, or anything calculated to excite animosity, ought to be carefully avoided. He quite agreed with the Chancellor of the Exchequer in his exhortation to avoid discussing the question in an acrimonious tone, and he also agreed that the course pointed out by the right hon. Gentleman was the proper course for the discussion of the question. But so far from avoiding personal topics, and keeping to the tone he had advised, the right hon. Gentleman chose to impute motives to those hon. Members who proposed, and those whose names appeared on the back of the Bill, which ought not to actuate them—motives which, indeed, ought not to actuate any public man. On the back of the Bill would be found names which he thought, if viewed in connexion with this measure, or in connexion with any measure that had for its object the improvement of the internal communication of the country, or related to matters connected with finance and the fluctuations in the money market, would carry the greatest weight and authority. There was the name of the hon. Member for Sunderland, a gentleman directly interested in promoting improved internal communication, and well versed in the construction of railways. That hon. Member, he thought, was entitled to the consideration of the House on the subject of railway communication. Then if the House wished to be advised of the effect of this particular measure on the money market and on the finances, there was the hon. Member for Westmoreland, an alderman of the city of London, and a Bank of England director. These were Gentlemen of the highest character and reputation, whose opinions ought to be treated with respect, and ought not to be exposed; o those insinuations which the right hon. Gentleman the Chancellor of the Exchequer, forgetting his own exhortations, had chosen to indulge in. But there were not only these names, but there were also the names on the Bill of the noble Lord the Member for Lynn, and the honoured name of the Member for Stamford, the Marquess of Granby; and was it right, he would ask, to insinuate anything against the motives and objects of a Bill on which the names of those hon. Members appeared? He considered that the high character and standing of those hon. Members should exempt them from such an insinuation as that this measure had been introduced, not to relieve the destitute poor of Ireland, but to relieve destitute shareholders. He denied that the character of the measure had been properly described by the right hon. Gentleman. He denied that the measure could be considered by any man who had given a moment's consideration to the objects and character of the Bill, as a measure either to relieve shareholders in railways, or to take money from the taxpayers of England to benefit the landlords of Ireland. He begged the House to bear with him for a few minutes while he made some remarks on the question under discussion. He would ask if it were possible, after looking to the object of the Bill, to attribute to its framers such objects as those which had been attributed to them by the right hon. Gentleman? The avowed purpose of the Bill was to stimulate the employment of labour in Ireland in the production of works likely to be of permanent benefit. They had, however, been told that Government, except in cases of great emergency, ought not to act the part of money lenders, or to advance loans to construct public works. Why, in the very business on which the House had been now engaged for some nights, the proposals of Government had been that the Government should be a money lender. The noble Lord at the head of the Government, in one of his Bills, asked for a loan to benefit private individuals. Therefore to object to the present measure on the ground that Government ought not to be a money lender, was, in fact, to make objections to the measures of Government itself. Along with the Bill introduced by the noble Lord the Member for Lynn, he held in his hand another Bill —a Government Bill—on which were the names of the First Lord of the Treasury, the right hon. Gentleman the Chancellor of the Exchequer, and the Chief Secretary for Ireland. That Bill was to facilitate improvements in landed property by advances to owners, and thereby to afford employment to destitute persons. The object of the Bill now under discussion was not to lend money by Government at all, not even on adequate security. The object of the noble Lord the Member for Lynn's Bill was to enable Government to interpose its credit, so as to enable works of great public utility to be constructed. But the right hon. Gentleman said, that this plan of employing the credit and capital of Government on public works, had been tried in Ireland, and had failed. An instance of this was given in the case of the Ulster Canal. It was stated that loans of money were made to enable the promoters of that canal to carry out their undertaking—that these loans were liberally made, and entirely lost. Now, he begged the attention of the House as to what was the actual result of this expenditure of public money in making the Ulster Canal; as the case had been brought before the House by the right hon. Gentleman as an instance of public money lent and lost without any benefit to the country. He would refer to a work on the subject that might be relied on by the right hon. Gentleman, as it was written, not by a protectionist, but by a free-trader, Mr. Porter. Mr. Porter had applied his attention to the subject of the money advanced by Government expended on the Ulster Canal, and the result. The question to be considered was, whether the interposition of the credit of the Government would be likely to benefit the people of Ireland, if directed to the completion of important public works. If hon. Gentlemen would turn to Mr. Porter's book, at that place where he referred to the experiment of lending money to complete the Ulster Canal, they would find Mr. Porter state, that during the progress of the works, they proved a great blessing to the districts through which they passed. This case was just such a case as that propounded by the right hon. Gentleman, as an example. In the case of the Ulster Canal, Mr. Porter stated, as to the expenditure of money during the progress of the work,

> —"that it proved a great blessing to the district through which it passed; it gave constant employment and fair wages to a great number of labouring men, and proved the means of reclaiming many from habits of reckless indifference and devotion to ardent spirits. It further gave these labourers the power and the habit of saving out of their wages."

Here, then, were the results of an experiment as to the expenditure of public money, which it was stated by the right hon. Gentleman had entirely failed. He appealed to that experiment, although, in that instance, the public money had been improvidently advanced, because not advanced on that sure ground which warranted an expectation of the advance being repaid. The money appeared to have been advanced without due inquiry as to the means of repayment; but had it proved a loss to this country? Had it not proved a blessing to Ireland; and had it not shown that even the case of the expenditure on public works of an improvident loan, was a blessing to the people? Mr. Porter went on further to describe the results. He said, whether the works stopped or were abandoned, this good had already taken place, that many of the workmen had laid by sufficient money to emigrate to Canada, where some had become proprietors. There was another considerable public work in Ireland referred to by the right hon. Gentleman, by way of warning to the House not to sanction the interposition of the credit of Government for works in Ireland calculated to give employment to the population. The right hon. Gentleman referred to a loan to the Dublin and Kingstown Railway; could any one doubt, that, during the progress of that work, the expenditure of money was beneficial? Every sixpence of that loan had been repaid. There was sufficient evidence to show at what rate railroads could be constructed; and of all the extravagant rates, the Dublin and Kingstown Railway and Harbour was the most extravagant. The expense was 60,000*l.* a mile, and yet the result was beneficial. Although the railway was so extravagantly constructed, every sixpence of the loan was repaid, and the shareholders enjoyed a profit of nine per cent for their outlay. After these facts, he was astonished to hear the right hon. Gentleman attempt to depreciate and deny the great benefit which must arise, not only during their progress, but after their completion, from the construction of works relating to internal communication. Mr. Porter's work was a collection of facts to illustrate national progress; and part of it was devoted to showing the benefit that flowed from works of internal improvement. The hon. Member who had last spoken, had referred to the state of Scotland, in this season of distress, as a proof that the people of a country might be supported without any such measure as that recommended by the noble Lord. Why, of all the men in the world, a Scotsman should have recollected, that if Lord Macdonald and Macleod of Macleod were enabled to maintain the starving by their own exertions in providing the poor with employment on their own estates, their prosperity as landowners enabling them to make such great and laudable exertions, was in consequence of the liberality of a former wise Government in advancing money for the construction, even in the wildest parts of Scotland, where there could be little prospect of a return upon the loan, of great public roads. It was a matter of notoriety that such was the fact, and that by thus opening up an internal communication, the condition of Scotland had been immeasurably improved. Great part of Mr. Porter's work was devoted to explaining the benefits to be derived from these communications; and there was hardly a page in the work which did not afford a powerful argument in favour of the measure now under the consideration of the House. It was matter of notoriety, that not only had the condition of Scotland been improved by an expenditure commenced by wise statesmen more than a century ago, without any contract or promise of payment of the sum advanced; but he found, with respect to works of this kind more immediately conducted by private enterprise, that the description given in that work of the benefits that had accrued from them, must strike any man with very great force who considered that they were now discussing, not only what was for the present benefit of Ireland, but what was likely permanently to augment the wealth and social prosperity of that country. Mr. Porter thus spoke of the expenditure in the Highlands of Scotland, and gave the opinion of a great authority in questions of this kind, the late Mr. Telford—a gentleman, not only himself engaged in the construction of these works, but who had lived long enough to see and estimate the benefit conferred on the country by wise expenditure for that purpose:—

> "Since its formation, the Board of Works in Scotland has caused the construction of 874 miles of road, and more than a thousand bridges. By these means, according to the opinion of the late Mr. Telford, whose opportunities of forming a correct judgment on the subject few persons will question, we have advanced civilization in the districts principally affected by at least an hundred years."

Mr. Porter stated, that a like effect had been experienced, in at least an equal degree, in Ireland; and he might refer to the authorities quoted in that work to show the benefits expected to accrue from extending the means of internal communication in the most barren districts of Ireland. Mr. Griffith, whose report was quoted by Mr.

Porter, speaking upon the subject in 1822, thus expressed himself in his report:—

> "The fertile plains of Limerick, Cork, and Kerry, are separated from each other by a deserted country, hitherto nearly an impassable barrier. This large district comprehends upwards of 900 square miles; in many places it is very populous. As might be expected, under such circumstances, the people are turbulent; and their houses being inaccessible for want of roads, it is not surprising that during the disturbances of 1821 and 1822 this district was the asylum for whiteboys, smugglers, and robbers, and that stolen cattle were drawn into it as to a safe and impenetrable retreat. Notwithstanding its present desolate state, this country contains within itself the seeds of future improvement and industry."

The seeds of improvement were cultivated; and he would read the result produced in the course of seven years by the construction of turnpike roads. In reporting on the state of this same district in 1829, the intelligent gentleman already mentioned, said—

> "A very considerable improvement has already taken place in the vicinity of the roads, both in the industry of the inhabitants and the appearance of the country; upwards of sixty new lime-kilns have been built; carts, ploughs, harrows, and improved implements, have become common; new houses of a better class have been built, new inclosures made, and the country has become perfectly tranquil, and exhibits a scene of industry and exertion at once pleasing and remarkable. A large portion of the money received for labour has been husbanded with care, laid out in building substantial houses, and in the purchase of stock and agricultural implements; and numerous examples might be shown of poor labourers possessing neither money, houses, nor land, when first employed, who in the past year have been enabled to take farms, build houses, and stock their lands."

He begged hon. Gentlemen to bear in mind the latter part of the passage; for the question was, how the wages of labour expended in constructing public works were employed and operated on the population? All this had been the result of seven years of roads constructed through this most sterile and most unpromising district. Another gentleman, of great authority in matters relating to the condition of Ireland, he meant Mr. Nimmo, stated, in a report made in the year 1824, that in a part of the county of Kerry—

> "A few years ago there was hardly a plough, car, or carriage of any kind; butter, the only produce, was carried to Cork on horseback; there was not one decent public-house, and only one house slated and plastered in the village; the nearest post-office thirty miles distant. Since the new road was made, there were built in three years upwards of twenty respectable two-story houses; a shop with cloth, hardware, and groceries; a comfortable inn, a post-office, bridewell, new chapel, a quay covered with limestone for manure, a salt-work, two stores for oats, and a considerable traffic in linen and yarn."

This gratifying statement described only the first beginning of improvement. When seven more years had passed, the population amounted to more than 1,100; they now exceed 1,300 souls. The twenty houses spoken of by Mr. Nimmo have increased to more than 250, forming the flourishing town of Cahirciveen, which was the centre of a considerable import and export trade. Now, he asked hon. Members to consider what, in a financial point of view, was the result of all these improvements, and whether all those enormous and marvellous results of the construction of works of internal communication had not greatly contributed to benefit the revenue of the country and the social condition of the people? They were now considering whether this measure of the noble Lord, which had been called a measure to encourage gambling and speculation, and put the money of the English taxpayer into the pockets of Irish landlords, had not been most inaccurately and untruly so described, both in its immediate effects and ultimate results? He undertook to demonstrate to any man who would attend to the principle of the measure, that when they were accused of calling on the people of England to pay, whether they would or not, out of their taxes, large sums of money to go to the construction of those works, there never was a misrepresentation more grossly unfounded. The hon. and learned Member for Bath had spoken in strong — he must say, too strong — terms on this subject; but if the hon. Gentleman would look at the machinery of the measure, he would see that the taxpayer was not called upon to put his hand into his pocket for sixpence. On the country, if the pockets of the taxpayers were the especial care of the hon. Member, there were very serious reasons why he ought to give the measure his most cordial support. What did this Bill propose to do? To take from the pockets of the taxpayer *de anno in annum* 4,000,000*l.* of money? There was no such proposal. What the advocates of the Bill maintained was, that if good security could be given, money should be raised on the credit of the Government. The first part of the Bill provided that there should be no advance made except on a scrutiny of the purpose for which it was asked; and on the credit and responsibility of a Government officer, there was a sufficient security for the repayment. A safe and profitable advance had been made by Government in the construction of the Dublin and Kingstown Railway. This was not made improvidently, by casting a sum of money among greedy speculators, that it might get into the hands of the most grasping; he took it for granted, that it was advanced after full consideration and inquiry, and on a reasonable prospect that it would be repaid. The functionary to whom this inquiry had been entrusted, had exercised his judgment wisely and well—the work had been constructed, Ireland had been benefited, and the money repaid. In the present case, how was the money proposed to be advanced? Were they to take from England 4,000,000*l*. a year to lend to Irish railways? That was not the proposal of the noble Lord; it was of an entirely different kind. The proposal was, that if skilful Government functionaries, worthy of being entrusted with so important a duty, should state that the railway for the completion of which it was proposed to procure money, was a work likely to succeed — likely to afford immediate employment in Ireland to the people, and to produce ultimate benefit to the country, as well as to be profitable in the end; then, and not till they were so satisfied, was the Government credit to be interposed. Now, he would ask any man, who seriously considered the subject in a financial point of view, to say whether the result of all those improvements—those most marvellous consequences of increased internal communication—would not be, besides the blessing of present employment to a starving population, an increase to the revenue of the empire, as well as lead to the permanent prosperity and social happiness of Ireland? He would ask hon. Members who fairly considered the subject, whether it was right to denounce this Bill as a measure to promote the interest of gambling speculators, or a measure to put the money of the English taxpayer into the pockets of the Irish landlords? He would undertake to demonstrate to any man that would take the trouble of going into the details of this measure, or rather without going into any minute details, that when they were accused of calling upon the people of England to say whether they would consent to put their hard-earned money into the pockets of the Irish landowners, they never were more grossly misrepresented. He ventured to say, that if the hon. and learned Member for Bath (Mr. Roebuck), who had expressed himself in strong, and he was sure much too strong terms on this subject, would but do them the favour of applying his understanding to this measure, he would find that his taxpaying fellow-countrymen were not called upon to put their hands into their pockets and give the Irish landlords one single sixpence. On the contrary, if the hon. and learned Member, as well as the other hon. Members, would but attend to the way in which the sum asked for was proposed to be raised and to be used, they would find the pocket of the English taxpayer was most especially cared for; and that there were serious reasons why, out of their regard to that pocket, and to the increase of the revenue of this country, the noble Lord (Lord G. Bentinck) should be entitled to expect their most cordial support. He would now ask what it was proposed by this Bill that they should do—that they should take out of the taxes of the empire *de anno in annum* 4,000,000*l*. to carry on the proposed works? There was no such proposal. What then was proposed? That if good security could be given, money should be advanced upon the credit of the Government. Now, the first distinguishing feature of this measure was, that it provided that the public credit should not be pledged for the repayment of loans until a sifting scrutiny was made by an officer of the Government into the nature of the proposed security, and his certificate was given to the effect that the advance would be safe. Had not the advance made by the Government to the Dublin and Kingstown Railway Company been a safe and profitable advance? That advance was made, not suddenly or improvidently; the money that was advanced in that case by the Government did not go into the hands of a set of greedy speculators. He took it for granted (for he heard nothing of the particulars), that no money was advanced to that company until a full inquiry had been made into the nature of the undertaking, and the proposed guarantees for repayment. He took it for granted, that that inquiry was answered in the affirmative. He believed that the functionaries of the Government had, in that case, manifested great wisdom in recommending the advance. The work had been conducted, and had done great benefit to Ireland; and part of the money had been already repaid. But how was the money proposed to be advanced by this Bill? Were they to take 4,000,000*l*. yearly from the Exchequer, in order to lend to the Irish railways? No, that was not the proposal of the noble Lord. His proposal was of an entirely different kind. It was that a functionary should be employed by the Government, to whom should be entrusted the important duty of showing that the railway, upon which it was proposed that the advance should be made, was a work likely to succeed; to afford employment to the people of Ireland; and likely to produce ultimate benefit to the country, as well as to be ultimately beneficial to the shareholders. If such, in that officer's opinion, were likely to be the case, the Government would then interpose its credit to enable the company to borrow the necessary sum on good security. By such a course the hon. and learned Member for Bath would, if he looked carefully into the matter, find that instead of money being taken out, it would be put into "the pockets of his taxpaying countrymen" by the Irish people. But he really believed that the people out of doors did not entertain the opinions of the hon. Gentleman on the subject. No taxpayer who had taken the trouble to inquire what this measure really was, would feel the slightest apprehension on the subject. Not one farthing was proposed to be taken out of the national Exchequer; it was proposed that the works should be carried on upon the credit of the Government, and that might be done in various ways. If it was done by the Chancellor of the Exchequer, for instance, it would be done merely upon Government security; but then the amount would be pledged to be repaid by good security. The Chancellor of the Exchequer might issue Exchequer-bills to the amount of the required sum, that was to say, if the Government considered the security good, and the repayment safe; because this was not a compulsory measure—this was not a measure that entitled the owners of shares and the directors of railways in Ireland to come in for a general scramble of the public money. It was entirely the reverse. It was a measure which would interpose between speculation and gambling in railways. Before any money could be advanced, the Government must be satisfied that the security was good, and it could only be unsafe or uncertain in a case where the officer of the Government did not properly discharge his duty. [Lord G. BENTINCK: He will be responsible to the Government.] But as the noble Lord had reminded him, that officer would be responsible to the Government, if he recommended as safe an undertaking which was likely to be merely a gambling speculation, or not profitable to the shareholders, he would be liable to be removed from his office. He appealed to the justice of hon. Members who intended to give their votes upon this measure, and who were called upon to reject it, because it was represented as one which would take money out of the pockets of the taxpayers of England, to carry on a gambling speculation, to read the words of the Bill. They would see how carefully such a proceeding was guarded against. If the right hon. the Chancellor of the Exchequer had done what in fairness and candour he (Mr. Stuart) thought he ought to have done—and the language was so plain, that he who ran might read, and he that read must understand—it would have been more fair to the House and to the country if he had applied his attention to the 18th clause, the words of which were—

> "That an advance is only to be made upon the Government being assured that the railway, if completed, will afford a reasonable prospect of sufficient security for the loan applied for."

Now, he stated the provisions of this Bill, being borne out by its words; and he challenged any hon. Member—he required it as an act of justice—that before he described this Bill as one which was to put into the hands of needy, and it might, perhaps, be greedy speculators, the Government money, he should read the 18th clause, and should afterwards state whether it was possible to misunderstand its provisions; and after having fairly read the Bill, he would ask him whether it did not provide not only that a sufficient guarantee should be given for any money lent by the Government, but also that the speculators themselves should be benefited? He had already endeavoured to prove to the House that the establishment of public works for the purposes of internal communication were beneficial to the country. And he would remind them that this Bill proposed no new proceeding. The mode in which loans were proposed, and security required, was no new measure. He had also said that it was in the power of the Government to issue Exchequer-bills to carry on the proposed works; but if the Government did not choose to adopt that course, there was another course open to them, which was admirably adapted to the purpose. He was indebted to his hon. Friend the Member for Westmorland (Mr. Alderman Thompson) for a copy of one of the securities, on which the moneys had been raised by means of which great public works had been carried on by the credit of the Government in Canada. Some years ago it was proposed that public works should be constructed in Canada, which was then in a condition somewhat similar to Ireland, for the purpose of employing the people. The Government was applied to, and it was thought a safe and reasonable thing on their part to interpose the credit of the Government for the purpose of enabling, not the Government, but other individuals, to lend their money upon security of the particular works, with the security of the Government superadded. The instrument issued by the Government for that purpose was a "Debenture;" and there could be no difficulty, he presumed, in the way of the Chancellor of the Exchequer adopting a similar course in the case of Ireland. He was thus particular on this subject, for the purpose of showing the absurdity of saying that the money required for Irish railways would have to come out of the pockets of the taxpayers of England. Repayment of the loans to be made by private individuals for the proposed railways, would be secured by Her Majesty out of the funds of Great Britain. He had been surprised to find some of his hon. Friends in opposition to this measure; and he alluded particularly to that small section of the House, who lately formed Her Majesty's Government. If they meditated voting against this Bill, he would have them to consider well what they had already done to sanction such measures. He would ask them, whether what they had already done in that direction, was wisely done and wisely sanctioned? And whether they should now stand up in that House, and taunt the noble Lord the Member for Lynn, or the hon. Member for Sunderland (Mr. Hudson), with bringing before the House a measure for the purpose of putting the money of the taxpayers of England, into the pockets of gambling speculators in Ireland? If they were to discuss like wise men the wisdom of this measure—it might be wise, it might be foolish—but he did entreat them to discuss it fairly: let them make a fair examination of the facts, and let them not be led away by such statements as those which they had heard, he regretted to say, from so high an authority as an officer of the Crown, in the position of the Chancellor of the Exchequer. Now, before he quitted the subject of advances of money, and the wisdom or expediency of the Government interfering with the various speculations which might be set on foot in Ireland, he would ask whether the Governments of any other countries had interfered in the same way? It was notorious that other Governments had so interfered in several instances; and he begged leave to call the attention of the House to what had been the result of that interference. It was well known that on the Continent, in Belgium and France—but in Belgium particularly—the Government had taken the whole subject of railways into its own hands, and had become, not the lender of the money upon security to be invested for a speculation, but itself the great speculator in railways. Now, what said the free-traders when they were talking of this, and considered the subject fully and deliberately in their closets? Mr. Porter could not be accused of any party purposes when he was considering whether the Belgian Government had acted wisely in not merely lending the money, but itself becoming the speculator in railways. Now, let him beg the attention of the House to what had been the result of the course pursued by the Government of Belgium in this respect, as estimated by Mr. Porter. According to Mr. Porter, that Government had invested its money to carry out railways; but from the lowness of the charges the money so laid out had never been repaid. But did that free-trader, Mr. Porter, consider that the Belgian Government had done an unwise thing in this? Did he consider that because, on account of the lowness of the charges, the interest on the money invested was not paid, that Government had done a foolish thing? No. On the contrary, he considered that the course taken was one which had proved a decided gain to the country. He showed, that even though the railway tolls were not affording an adequate remuneration to the Government, the whole revenue of the State was deriving a great advantage. The nation at large had derived great benefit from the measure in the diminished charges for conveyance—an advantage in which, in one shape or other, the whole Belgian nation participated. Those were the opinions of Mr. Porter, an honest free-trader; and he believed that in using them, he was influenced by no party considerations. But it was said, that if all the Commons in England did not reject this measure, be it wise or not, unless the Prime Minister should be of opinion that it was a wise one, and if they persevered in the measure, why a greater calamity than a famine—greater evils than those which now afflicted Ireland

—greater than the starvation which now existed in that country, would take place—the Prime Minister would resign. Now, he, for one, should very much regret that result, because at the present moment it was impossible to say that some embarrassment and some difficulty might not be caused by that resignation. But such a threat was hardly worthy of a great Government—it strongly indicated a feeble Government. When such topics were urged by any Member of the House, and he begged hon. Members who might be swayed or influenced—as many would be by that, to them, formidable intimation—to consider that it was not a new device of Prime Ministers. Cases had occurred in that House before, in which Prime Ministers made similar threats, which were obeyed; but he begged hon. Members to consider what were the results. Why, the late Prime Minister of England some years ago, after a vote in that House given by a great majority of the House on an important question, came down and told his supporters that unless they rescinded that vote, he would resign. Now, he did not mean to ask the House to act according to what were his (Mr. Stuart's) opinions of what might be called political morality or political integrity; but he would ask the House whether, after hon. Members had honestly given their vote upon any particular measure, it was right or wise that they should rescind their votes, merely because the Prime Minister for the time being might threaten that unless they did rescind it, he would resign? He believed that no good would result from such conduct; nor did he consider it to be consistent with political honesty. Now, he should be sorry to use any expression offensive to any hon. Member, but he begged leave only to be understood as expressing his individual opinion upon the subject. He believed that there were many other hon. Members who participated in that opinion; and that it was the opinion of the great body of the people. Whoever would consider the result of such a course as that pursued by the right hon. Baronet the Member for Tamworth, to induce his supporters to come down and vote that that was wrong which two nights before they had voted to be right, would find that it ended in disappointment; the result was disastrous even to himself. And he (Mr. Stuart) appealed to those Members who might be supposed to be influenced by the threat of the present Prime Minister, not to consider that threat, but to look fairly into this measure, and they would, he believed, vote in favour of it. If, however, they listened to the threat, they would get no credit themselves, and they would do no good to the Government: nay, more, such a proceeding would be heavily visited upon the head of the Prime Minister. That was the case of the right hon. Baronet the Member for Tamworth. It was thought that unbounded confidence might be reposed in his Government; and how was that confidence justified? Why, what did the House witness in the course of the last Session of Parliament? What did they witness upon that occasion which placed the noble Lord at the head of the Government, in the place which he now ocupied? Every one of those who had improperly, in his (Mr. Stuart's) opinion, voted for the Coercion Bill, merely to keep that right hon. Baronet in office, had been disappointed in that object. They had the discredit of giving an improper vote merely to save the Government, and yet had not succeeded in saving it. He deeply regretted (and he believed he spoke within the hearing of some of the hon. Members who voted upon that occasion) that they should have on an important question sacrificed their independent opinion, because of the threat of a Prime Minister of the Crown. But the right hon. Baronet had not, after all, benefited by this conduct; on the contrary, the right hon. Baronet had brought discredit upon himself, and was in his opinion most justly deprived of the government of this country. He begged to call the attention of the Government to the fact that the Belgian Government invested money in railways even where they did not pay. Some people might say that there was more of absolute power in the Belgian Government; but what did the United States of America do? Why, they pledged the credit of the Government to procure the construction of the public works. And he begged of the Government to attend to the result of that policy. It could not be denied that the Government of the United States was a wise, a crafty, and a selfish Government. The United States was above all other countries remarkable for speculation and enterprise of the most gambling and extravagant character. Well, this very Government interposed the credit of the State, for the purpose of executing these public works. Neither the fact nor the result escaped the observation of Mr. Porter, who said that the canals were made not with the money of the State, for that was not so easily had, but with money borrowed on the credit of the State. They did not construct the works, like Belgium, at their own expense, but they interposed their credit to enable money to be raised for the construction of those great canals. Already, observed Mr. Porter, a large portion of the cost of these works was realized from the tolls, and in a few years the State would be in possession of an unincumbered and splendid income, which would lighten considerably the burden of the taxation of that country. Was that wise, or was it not? No man could doubt its wisdom. Well, now, observe the difference of the two cases. The Government was only called upon by his noble Friend to pledge the public credit to procure loans for the purpose of constructing works of great public utility, so that the taxpayer might not be too heavily burdened. It could not be denied that ultimately the works would prove most advantageous—that they would tend to promote internal intercourse, increase trade, and give employment to a starving population; but, besides all this, there was another reason for the Bill, which did not exist in the United States, namely, a great emergency. And further, they were at present paying large sums of the public money, without any prospect of return, for the relief of the distress which existed, and which could be far better expended on railways. The United States was not visited with such a calamity as that which now existed in Ireland, when they pledged the public credit. No, they did so on the speculation that it would prove of advantage to the country, and their anticipations were realized. The Chancellor of the Exchequer said that nothing but an emergency could justify such an expenditure as that sought for. What, Sir, nothing but emergency? Had he not shown that no such emergency existed, when the most selfish Government in the world (he used the epithet in no invidious sense) had pledged the credit of the State to an immense amount for the construction of public works. Let any man contrast the present state of Ireland with that of America when this proposal was sanctioned, and say where was the greater exigency? Why, Sir, in Ireland, if ever there were only a poor prospect of repayment—if the security were doubtful, the advantages remote, he could not doubt for a moment that even still the British people would be willing that Government should interpose its credit for a purpose so useful. The Bill of the noble Lord was no newfangled theory. It was the result of deep meditation; it was based upon experience; it bore the impress of wisdom. Why was there a question about the utility of the scheme? It was said that it was a gift to the Irish landlords. It was a mockery to say so. How could money expended in the way Mr. Porter had described, go into the pockets of the Irish landlords, or any other comparatively small section? Anybody who did not shut his eyes to the contents of the Bill, must see that this was a fiction, a mere delusion, which, at least, ought to find no encouragement in the House of Commons. The noble Lord at the head of the Government had on the first night met the Bill with several objections, but, he must admit, in a statesman-like manner, and, on the whole, very different from that of the Chancellor of the Exchequer. The noble Lord's first objection was, that in Ireland there were a vast number of railway projects — that Government must give a preference to some, and thereby encourage gambling and speculation. If that objection was well founded, he admitted it was a serious one. But he asked the House to consider whether or no it was so. As to preference, why the whole system of railway legislation was one of preference. And as far as the objections of preference went, he admitted that this Bill involved it, for the Commissioners must give a preference to good over bad security. Then as to speculation. He did not very well see how the Government could prevent it, nor yet how the public would suffer from it; nor did he think Parliament should be deterred from conferring a great national advantage from the fear that for a few months some railway speculators might be kept in a state of anxiety. The noble Lord admitted that by the Bill employment would be given to the poor; but he said the able-bodied would be chiefly employed. Well, suppose it should be so, was that no benefit? Would Ireland derive no advantage in her present condition from having her able-bodied population employed? Was it an objection to the Bill, that wages would not be distributed, as at present, by the Government to the halt and the lame? Why, Sir, if the able-bodied alone were to be employed on railways, it would, at all events, make room for the employment of those who were less able-bodied in other occupations. And had not the able-bodied, brothers, sisters, and parents, who would be benefited by their getting constant employment and good wages? Such objections would not stand the test of practical experience for a single moment, and did not come very well from the lips of political economists. But the Chancellor of the Exchequer pushed the matter still further. He said, "Your railways will be in the east, whilst starvation and distress are in the west." For men to advocate such narrow views—for free-traders to set up such a theory—was strange indeed. Why, would not common sense tell a man, that when a demand for labour was created in the north, south, east, or west, it would be met from whatever quarters there was a redundancy of supply. Could any one believe that the able-bodied peasant, who was starving from want of employment in Mayo or Galway, would not go to Kilkenny or Kildare, if employment was to be had in those quarters? Why, would not the labourer in Ireland, as well as in other places, endeavour to sell his labour in the dearest market? To his understanding, the argument, if such it could be called, was a mere mockery. [Lord G. Bentinck: Do not the Irish poor go to Liverpool?] Yes, truly, as his noble Friend aptly remarked, did not the Irish labourer save the money which he ought to expend upon a loaf for his family, to pay his passage to England, to a distant, and, to him, foreign country, to seek for remunerative employment? And yet, according to the Chancellor of the Exchequer, he would not seek for it in his own country. But, said the noble Lord the Member for the city of London, "those railway projects will be productive of no immediate advantage; the benefit is prospective; they may or they may not pay. It may be years before they pay; it may be years before they produce those happy results so confidently anticipated." Such were the arguments of the noble Lord. Why, was the immediate employment of able-bodied labourers in Ireland, in the present state of that country, a prospective advantage? Was affording the instant means of procuring bread to a starving population, a remote benefit? Surely, no man could say so. But this was not the first time when the assistance of the Government had been given with advantage for the construction of public works. What account did Mr. Porter give of the consequences of assisting a public work, even where the money was unprofitably expended? He meant the Ulster Canal. Mr. Porter said, that although that work was a failure, it conferred a blessing during its execution, by affording employment. For these reasons, he thought that a greater boon could not be conferred on the Irish people, under present circumstances, than the pledging of the public credit in order to the construction of works which would procure immediate subsistence and employment to the starving population in Ireland, and works, too, which, when constructed, must eventually tend very materially to promote the prosperity, not only of Ireland, but of the United Kingdom.

Mr. F. T. BARING observed, that the speech of the hon. and learned Member for Newark appeared to him a very unsatisfactory answer to the lucid, and in all respects admirable, statement of his right hon. Friend the Chancellor of the Exchequer. He could have wished that the hon. and learned Gentleman had applied his abilities rather to replying to the objections of the Chancellor, than to indulging, as he in many instances had done, in general declamation on the question. There was one mode of viewing this question, which had been treated very lightly by the hon. and learned Gentleman, but to which he (Mr. Baring) was disposed to attach very great weight, namely, its relation to the present state of the country's finances. The hon. and learned Gentleman had gone so far as to contend that the project was one which would be advantageous to the taxpayers; but he confessed that the manner in which he sought to argue this proposition was calculated rather to inspire fear than confidence. He did not mean to question the great resources of this country, or to doubt its ability to make an effort to meet any extraordinary emergency that might be forced upon it; but what excited his surprise was, that the hon. and learned Gentleman should have thought it a mere trifle—a matter so insignificant in a financial point of view as to be scarcely worthy of a moment's consideration, that in addition to all the vast sums already expended in Ireland, England should pledge herself to the disbursement of sixteen millions of money—four millions of money annually for the next four years. That was a mere trifle, scarcely worth noticing. The hon. and learned Gentleman had talked of the facility of accomplishing the great object on which he was bent by means of Exchequer-bills, and he had even condescended to enlighten the House on the point of what an Exchequer-bill meant; but he was not quite certain whether the noble Lord opposite (Lord George Bentinck), who was hereafter to carry on the Government, or who had at least informed them last night that he was ready to do so, and who, from his knowledge of statistics, would probably occupy the post which he once filled—he was not, he repeated, quite certain whether that noble Lord would find it quite so easy a matter as the noble Lord's hon. Friend appeared to think to bring those four millions of Exchequer-bills into the market. Already that description of security was wavering on the confines of discount, and he feared their marketable value would not be very great the morning after the new issue. If that was the noble Lord's great monetary scheme, if that was his boasted plan for raising money so as to benefit the people of the empire, all that he could say was that he had no great confidence in the financial speculation about to be introduced. But the hon. and learned Member for Newark maintained that there was an absolute certainty of repayment. This assertion he made very roundly; but when he came to talk of the securities and guarantees which actually existed for repayment, he found he was treading on ticklish ground, and with the dexterity of an able advocate he veered quietly round, and began to enlarge on the great advantages to be derived from public works. But the sturdiness with which the hon. and learned Gentleman insisted upon the benefit of such works, even in cases where the advances were never repaid, afforded strong grounds for supposing that he felt some slight misgivings in his own mind as to the prospect of repayment in the present instance. Surely it was worth while for the English people to pause before they plunged their hands so deeply into their pockets, and to deliberate well upon the chances of their sixteen millions being paid back. The hon. and learned Gentleman had triumphantly referred to the case of the Dublin and Kingstown Railway. The prosperity of that line, which was eight miles in length, and which ran through the richest part of Ireland, he was not prepared to dispute—he admitted it unequivocally; but he denied that the fact of that company's prosperity was to be taken as a test of the success which awaited all railway enterprises in Ireland. If that was the noble and learned Gentleman's only argument—if that was the only "great fact" he could rest upon—it was to be feared that the chances of repayment were but small. "But," said the hon. and learned Gentleman, "you are sure to be repaid, for you have a great public board, whose duty it will be to look into the securities for repayment; and to take care that no advances be made, unless those securities be unquestionable." If this were to be construed strictly, he would be very much disposed to think that the Legislature, after all, need have very little fear of granting the sixteen millions tomorrow. Mark how this would work. One of the hon. and learned Member's great objects was to employ the destitute population of Ireland. Which would be the best railway lines? When the Railway Board would come to look into the various Bills submitted to their consideration, what lines would appear to them most worthy of their sanction and assistance? Assuredly those which would run through the richest tract of country; lines which would run through districts where great want and destitution prevailed would afford the least security for repayment, and of course could not receive the sanction of the Board. How, then, could they carry employment into the destitute districts of Ireland? The districts where it was most essential that the people should be relieved, were those which would be the very last to which the efforts of railways could apply. The measure was sought to be justified on two grounds. First, the temporary advantage of Ireland, regard being had to her present distress; and then her permanent advantage. The right hon. Gentleman the Chancellor of the Exchequer had told them, in the first place, that for every 4,000*l.* advanced, only 1,000*l.* would be employed on labour. If that were so, where would the other 3,000*l.* go? He did not feel any jealousy towards those who had invested their capital in railway speculations, nor towards the Irish landowners; but he felt that the people of England ought not to advance money in order to benefit the interests of those classes. Those persons had a perfect right to reap any advantage that was to be derived from the investment of their capital in railways; but he begged to protest against their deriving advantage by the employment of the capital of the people of England. His right hon. Friend the Chancellor of the Exchequer had said, that the employment likely to result from the construction of those railways would be created in places where the employment was least wanted; and that in the most destitute districts, where relief and employment were most required, no railway would be constructed. To that argument he admitted some answer had been attempted. It had been said that they could not pour money into one part of Ireland without benefiting another; that they could not afford relief to the people of the east coast, without conferring advantage upon those of the west. Now this might be all very true; but results like these could not be expected until after the lapse of a certain period. It might be all very true that the lapse of years would show that they could not benefit one half of the island now, without eventually advantaging the other half as well; but then this measure, as a measure for giving immediate relief and employment to the destitute population of the western coast, would not be found to have any effect whatever. It should be remembered that time was everything. At a moment when men were starving, time was everything. They might make one half of Ireland rich, while they left the other half in a starving condition. His right hon. Friend the Chancellor of the Exchequer had said, that railways would not employ the population even of the districts through which they would run. The hon. and learned Member for Newark had not attempted to deny this statement. He fell back upon political economy, and contended that if he took a number of persons out of the labour-market, wherever it might be, others would necessarily be benefited. That was perfectly correct; but it was a question of time; and looking on this project as a mere temporary measure, he thought it would be inoperative of good; for surely it would be very much better to carry employment to the destitute districts at once, than to wait until, by absorbing the "navvies" of England, they might look forward to employ the labouring population of Ireland. If any Gentleman had read the blue books on the Table, he would see that the best way to employ the people of Ireland, was not in large bodies of men, but by distributing them, and carrying the work to their own doors. That they did not effect by the present Bill. The great ground of complaint against the employment on public works which had heretofore been resorted to in Ireland, was, that it did not fulfil that condition. But he would take leave to call attention to one part of the argument which was worth considering. Independently of its merits as a measure for temporary relief, this Bill had been represented as in itself a great and comprehensive permanent measure. He (Mr. Baring) wished to consider it as a measure, separate from its use as affording temporary relief. The hon. and learned Gentleman read quotations from Mr. Porter, setting forth the advantage of employing money on public works. To these quotations, he (Mr. Baring) was not inclined to take exception. He willingly admitted that in many cases it might be attended with advantage, that Government should pledge its credit for the carrying out of public works. In the year 1839, he voted for the proposal of Mr. Drummond. He admitted that he did so; but he never had greater difficulty in making up his mind to any vote, and subsequent consideration had tended to confirm rather than to weaken his doubts. But at the same time, while his feeling was strongly in favour of the position, that, in England at least, it would on the whole be better to leave capital to the discretion of private intelligence and private enterprise; and while he admitted his belief, that, in a country like this, such a course was the most prudent, and the one most suitable to the genius of the constitution and of the people; still, on the other hand, he was willing to admit, that, in the case of railways, the principle was not unattended with inconvenience. With regard to a general system of railways, other countries had followed a different course, which had its own advantages; but what he wished to show was, that none of the advantages which other countries had secured to themselves would be the result of the "great and comprehensive scheme" now under consideration. The hon. and learned Gentleman had referred to the case of Belgium; but had Belgium advanced money to private companies for the construction of railways? Certainly not. No; the Government of Belgium took the entire railway communication of the country into its own hands. This was something of the plan of Mr. Drummond; he objected to it for England. It was not, however, without its advantages. No doubt it would create a great monopoly; but it would be for the public advantage, not for private benefit. If the charges were too high, the surplus would go to the public revenue; if they were too low, what was a loss to the Exchequer would go into the pockets of the people. Again, by placing the management of railways in the hands of the Government, this advantage was secured, that the loss of unprofitable lines was counterbalanced by the gains of profitable ones. The loss was set off against the gain. But no such advantage was proposed to be secured by the present Bill. The unavoidable tendencies of hon. Gentlemen, who were themselves connected with railways, induced them naturally enough to take very good care of all that attached to railways; but there was no advantage whatsoever secured to the public, as in the case of Belgium. After the noble Lord's Bill passed, if indeed it were to pass, the monopoly enjoyed by railway companies would be quite as secure as before. All the profitable lines would go on. The unprofitable ones would be thrown upon the hands of the Government. That would be the result. This was talked of as a permanent measure. It was his decided impression that, under the present circumstances of unexampled emergency, it would be unwise to deal with great and important public questions of this description. Let them deal with the emergency first, and then, in a calm moment of deliberation, consider what practicable and feasible scheme, adapted to the requirements of the country, it might be judicious to introduce. France had been alluded to by the hon. and learned Gentleman. Did the French Government advance money to private companies, leaving the management of the lines to them? Not at all. He was not going to say that the French system was better than that followed in England. But the Government of France got something by their encouragement of private enterprise. The Post-office despatches were carried without charge, and troops were gratuitously transferred from place to place. The French lines were leased by Government for a certain period, at the expiration of which they fell back again to the public; and so great was the advantage derived from that plan that a friend of his had calculated—though he (Mr. Baring) did not guarantee the accuracy of the statement—that had it been adopted from the first construction of railways in this country, they should have been able, by the present time, to pay off the national debt. There was no provision in the noble Lord's Bill, he believed, for paying off the national debt; on the contrary, he thought that one effect of its enactment would be to increase that large debt still more. Certainly the scheme proposed by the noble Lord would not produce any of those advantages which foreign Governments derived from their encouragement of private enterprise; and, on looking carefully through its details, he felt that it was one of the least wise permanent arrangements that could be suggested, and so utterly inapplicable to the present financial condition of the country, that he wondered it could have emanated from a council of which the hon. member for Essex was one. On these grounds he thought that the measure of the noble Lord was not adapted either for the removal of present difficulties, or for the permanent advantage of the country. He did not wish to be understood as giving an unqualified opposition to all encouragement by Government to railway enterprises in Ireland. He would not preclude Government from making, in particular cases, and with great reservation, advances for the earthworks of railways. On the contrary, he hoped that Government would take some such plan into consideration. He did not say that he was hostile to some great arrangement for the purpose of Irish railways; but if they did make any great arrangement for the purpose, and if they advanced the capital of the country—for after all, though they might call it a loan, it would take 16,000,000*l.* from that fund that was destined to employ the people of England, and transfer that to the fund that was destined to employ the people of Ireland—if they did that, at any rate let them take a fair view of the subject, let them look into it fully, and see if it would give them some equivalent advantage for their money. If they followed the policy of foreign Governments, at least let them follow their prudence also: let them not advance their money for objects which would not produce at all, for the present, an equivalent advantage to the destitute population, but would lay down for the future a system that would only strengthen monopoly, and do no one good to the public interests of the country.

SIR JOHN TYRELL said, it was not his intention to have addressed the House on the subject, if it had not been for the allusion which was made to him by the right hon. Gentleman who had just sat down. The strong recollection that must attach to the right hon. Gentleman since the period when he had schemes of a financial character to submit to the House and to the country, and which were so well recorded in the memories of every Gentleman in the House, as well as in works of art, quite superseded the necessity for more particularly alluding to the right hon. Gentleman. But he must tell the right hon. Gentleman, who thought proper to come to the rescue of the Chancellor of the Exchequer, they had certainly witnessed very extraordinary exhibitions in that House from various Chancellors of the Exchequer. It was but the other night that the right hon. Gentleman and the House had witnessed the scene of a right hon. Gentleman shedding tears over a blue book. That right hon. Gentleman had exhibited all those powers of sympathy that belong to him; and really he was, at the moment, inclined to think there would be some hope for Ireland, with reference to an advance of public money, on the grounds which had been put before the House with such great ability by the noble Lord the Member for Lynn. But the House, on a former occasion, had a no less extraordinary exhibition from the right hon. Baronet the Member for Tamworth, who, after forty years' experience, and having been Secretary for Ireland thirty-five years ago—and having moved for blue book after blue book, and inquiry after inquiry—to say nothing of Lord Devon's report—having, as it were, the choice of all measures that would be likely to be conducive to the benefit of Ireland, had only proposed to support the noble Lord at the head of the Government in laying the foundation of measures expressive of their sympathy for Ireland, and promoting its permanent welfare. He must beg to say, that on all occasions he had voted for a poor law for Ireland. As an apology to the Irish Gentlemen for his doing so, he would state that he had several years ago had an opportunity of residing in the south of Ireland for the period of a year. He mentioned this, because English Members were constantly accused of having voted for measures for Ireland in ignorance of the social condition of that country. He might state that he had the good fortune to pass from Dublin to the south of Ireland the day after the celebrated robbery of the Cashel mail, and he observed that whenever they changed horses there were two dragoons before and two behind the coach, with two guards seated on the dickey. When he arrived in the south of Ireland—in one of the most flourishing towns in that part of the country, the town of Fermoy—he had many other occasions of seeing the social condition of the country. He saw those horrid objects who usually are sheltered in hospitals and asylums, and other charitable institutions in this country—he saw them there exposed to public view for the purpose of exciting charity—he saw the dead on a market-day exposed on biers, that they might ensure Christian burial; and when he called upon a gentleman not very far from the scene which he described, he had a perfect recollection of seeing opposite his windows sentry boxes cut out among the trees, to enable beggars to present themselves for charity, whenever the inhabitants came to the door or walked out in his grounds. When he saw that such was the social condition of the country, he felt that their social condition would be improved by a poor law, and therefore he had invariably voted for it. He was not one of those who believed that it was beyond the power of legislation to improve the condition of that people. He believed that many of the measures which were proposed by the noble Lord opposite were calculated to effect an important improvement in the social condition of society; but he thought the measures of Government failed in that object, when compared with the measure brought forward by the noble Lord the Member for Lynn, which would not only meet the present destitute situation of Ireland, but which had in it the seeds and elements of permanent improvement in a far greater degree than the comparatively petty measures—the pot-and-kettle measures, if he might call them so—or the soup-ticket measures which had lately been introduced. He said it was the duty of statesmen so to regulate the interests of a great country like this, that regard should be had, not only to the immediate necessities of persons in extreme distress, but that regard should be had to the permanent improvement of the country. He was one of those who thought, notwithstanding all the measures that had been introduced to the House, still when this measure came fairly before the consideration of the country, when the illusions were dissipated which hon. Gentlemen had propagated, that they on his side of the House were guilty of a profligate expenditure—that they were unmindful of the other claims on the public purse—and that they were bidding for the votes of Irish Gentlemen on light and frivolous grounds—he was confident that it would secure the approbation of the country. By the complexion which the noble Lord opposite had given to this debate, he had put the real merits of the question aside, and he called the House to decide, as it were, upon a question of confidence in the Government; so that the votes of many hon. Members would be given, not with reference to their sincere convictions on the questions before them. The other night the hon. Member for Bath said, that it was desirable that the truth should be spoken. Now, he would not say that the truth had not been spoken to-night, but he believed that the whole truth had not been spoken. He believed it had not escaped the sagacity of the noble Lord at the head of the Government, that great advantages would arise if railways were promoted by Her Majesty's Government. It was well known that the private opinion of the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland was in favour of a system of railways for Ireland. But every one knew that the noble Lord opposite had been placed at the head of the Government under circumstances of peculiar difficulty; and he, for one, sincerely believed that the noble Lord felt that, on this occasion, he was not at liberty to follow the guidance of his own judgment, and that he was prevented from taking an enlarged and comprehensive view of the subject by his apprehension of the opposition of the right hon. Baronet the Member for Tamworth. Now, remembering the influence which his opinions formerly had upon all subjects connected with the business of that House, he (Sir J. Tyrell) felt it his duty, and he had considerable curiosity, to ascertain what were that right hon. Baronet's sentiments on the important question before the House. The late Chancellor of the Exchequer and the right hon. Baronet the Member for Tamworth had not yet thought proper to favour the House or the country with the expression of their sentiments; and, therefore, as the nearest approximation to their opinions on this subject, he had referred to the views which were held by the late heads of the Government, when a question very similar was brought before the House. In 1839, when they were discussing the question of railways in Ireland, the right hon. Baronet said, that if he opposed their adoption, the ground of his opposition was not the expense of the measure. That, in his opinion, was no objection to the scheme. On the contrary, once show him that this measure would benefit Ireland, and the expense would not deter him from giving his assent to it. Now, it might happen, and perhaps the noble Lord, from his knowledge of the right hon. Baronet's tactics, might be justified in inferring, that because the right hon. Baronet was favourable to such a measure in 1839, therefore he had a fair right to conclude that the contrary would be his opinion now. The right hon. Gentleman, who had just sat down, advocated strongly the propriety of leaving these matters to the energy of private speculation. But there were considerable objections and disadvantages attending that state of things; and perhaps the House would allow him to state one case which occurred in his own county. He believed that no less than 60,000*l.* had been expended in law proceedings, and in that House, upon a railway between Colchester and Harwich, a distance of twenty miles only, and where the latter was well known to be a good watering place, and to present great facilities for continental traffic. Now, surely it must be admitted that the spending of this money on merely preliminary expenses was a great calamity. There were other evils arising from leaving railways to the exercise of private enterprise alone, as every Member must feel on coming down to the House when he found the public streets blocked up by professional men and railway agents, by lawyers and blue bags; and he believed it was a fact that two-thirds of the jewellery purchased in this town was purchased by members of the legal profession, and by others who were made rich at the expense of the railways. Upon these grounds, he would give his cordial support to the measure brought forward by the noble Lord below him, which he believed was more calculated for the permanent welfare of Ireland than the measures which had been brought forward by the Government.

Mr. DILLON BROWNE was not prepared on this occasion to support the proposition of the noble Lord the Member for Lynn, because he conceived that by voting for the noble Lord's measure, he should be declaring his confidence in any Administration that might be formed by the noble Lord the Member for Lynn, and his want of confidence in Her Majesty's Ministers. Under any circumstances—and he was sorry the noble Lord at the present moment was not in his place—under any circumstances he was not prepared to support the policy of the noble Lord the Member for Lynn, until he ascertained from him what were his intentions respecting other matters connected, not alone with the social, but with the political condition of Ireland. He could not forget that the party of which the noble Lord was the powerful and intelligent leader, had been for centuries the consistent opponents of the extension of civil and religious liberty to his country. He could not forget that they had been the consistent supporters of monopoly, both as regarded the commercial and political interests of this country; and until he heard a distinct declaration as to what was to be the policy of the noble Lord on other matters connected with Ireland, he (Mr. Browne) was not prepared to give a vote that would bring him into office. He could not forget that the noble Lord had opposed Catholic emancipation—["No!"]—he meant that the party to which the noble Lord belonged had opposed Catholic emancipation; he could not forget that they had opposed the Reform Bill; he could not forget that they were opposed to any settlement of the Church question in Ireland; he could not forget all these circumstances; and until he heard a declaration from the noble Lord the Member for Lynn on these points, he could not say that he would support the noble Lord's policy. He should be willing on this occasion to give his vote to the noble Lord, if he declared what policy he was about to pursue respecting other matters connected with the political condition of Ireland. He wished to know what policy the noble Lord would pursue with regard to the franchise; what policy he would pursue with regard to giving an increased representation of Ireland; what policy the noble Lord would pursue with regard to the appropriation of the surplus revenues of the Church of Ireland to secular purposes. He wished to know what was the noble Lord's opinion respecting a measure which was about to be brought under the consideration of Parliament for reclaiming waste lands in Ireland, and creating new elements in the social system of that country, by establishing a body of independent agricultural yeomanry in Ireland. He thought that the plan of the noble Lord was rather calculated to benefit the landed proprietors of Ireland than the great body of the people, although certainly it was calculated to give them employment for a time. The improvement of the waste lands of Ireland would not give probably the same immediate amount of employment, but then it would furnish a continued and permanent employment. Suppose that a system of railroads was made in Connaught, it would enhance the value of land to the grazier in that province, in consequence of the increased facilities it would afford to send his produce to market, and would also induce the landlords to reclaim the waste lands, and thus tend to place the redundant population on another footing on the soil. He did not think that the reclamation of the waste lands of Ireland would be a panacea for all the evils which afflicted that country; but he conceived that the adoption of an extensive system of that kind would aid the raising the first necessaries of life in Ireland. He conceived that it would be better to colonise the waste lands of Connemara and Erris, and the mountains of Kerry and Donegal, than to send out at great expense to colonise Australia and Canada. It would be much better to do this than resort to the latter system, for it took the best men as well as capital out of the country. Most of those persons who emigrated were men who possessed capitals of 30*l.*, 50*l.*, or 100*l.* By the emigration of such men, facilities to obtain employment were not created for those who remained behind, as it could not be said that when they left, others would step in their places. A man possessed of one or two hundred pounds would often give employment to two or three other men; but when he emigrated, there would be the less for the employment of so much labour, for he took his capital with him. The system of colonising the waste lands of Ireland would be most beneficial to the mass of the population of Ireland; he therefore wished to know whether the noble Lord the Member for Lynn was prepared to support such a system as would compel the landlords of Ireland to cultivate the waste lands themselves, or let others do so, by which the greatest advantages would be derived to the country. He would entreat the noble Lord at the head of the Government, when he brought forward his plan for the reclamation of waste lands in Ireland, to make it compulsory, so that the landlords should not, like the dog in the manger, refuse to do it themselves or let others do it. It was most desirable to establish a body of independent yeomanry in Ireland, such as was contemplated in the scheme of the noble Lord the Member for the city of London. This would introduce a new element into society, and create a new class between the aristocracy and the peasantry. By such means, you would make the one class nearer the other; and you would also create a body of yeomen which the peasantry below them would endeavour to reach by every exertion in the arts of industry. It had been stated that the adoption of a plan of this kind would result in small territorial divisions; but he did not believe that anything of the kind was to be apprehended. They might take the instance of a country in which this system had been adopted with the most beneficial result, but which was previously in a worse condition than Ireland, and was obliged to import a large portion of its food. By dividing and reclaiming the Crown lands, and partitioning them among the people, the peasantry, from the most wretched condition, had been raised, under the superintendence and care of the Government, to a state of comparative prosperity in many parts of the country. He alluded to Sweden. There was a great identity between the former condition of that country and the present condition of Ireland. In that country, instead of importing food, the exports had greatly increased, and the whole face of the country had been cultivated. The greatest improvement in the condition of the people had taken place, and this had solely arisen from the wise system of cultivating the Crown lands of the country, which previously were nothing but waste lands. The consequence had been, that the greatest change had taken place in every phase and condition of society in Sweden. With the view of showing the great change that had taken place in many parts of Sweden, he would refer the House to the statement of a writer who lived previously to the adoption of the system he had referred to. That author (Mr. Hemmens) states—

> "It rarely happens that a single family possesses an entire division; more frequently it is parcelled out among a great many, in lots, scarcely sufficient to accommodate the increasing number of children, to exercise one plough, or pasture a few cows and sheep. In Dalecarlia, this process of dismemberment is carried so far, that properties are broken down into fractional parts of acres and roods, not worth two or three rixdollars—a state of things hostile to all improvement, and the source of much poverty and distress in the country in consequence."

He would now read an extract from *Crichton's Scandinavia*, which had been written since the adoption of the plan:—

> "The produce of their scanty harvests was long insufficient for the subsistence of the inhabitants, who were compelled to purchase foreign grain to a considerable extent; and even, in the northern districts, to grind the bark of the fir to eke out the stinted supply of their natural food. Every year it became necessary to import from Dantzic or Holland to the extent of 300,000*l.* or 400,000*l.* sterling. The commercial scale in this respect has of late completely turned in favour of Sweden. Numerous societies have been instituted for the encouragement of agricultural enterprise. Government has zealously seconded the exertions of private individuals; and the king has set a personal example to his subjects in purchasing experimental farms—particularly that of Engtlofta, near Helsingborg—that he might exhibit the development of the art upon the most approved principles. The nobility, by their fortunate preference of rural pursuits, have also contributed powerfully to the diffusion of the same habits among the inferior orders. Since 1803 upwards of 6,000 farms have been created out of large tracts of crown lands previously lying waste. The result has been of immense value to the agricultural prosperity of Sweden. Instead of depending upon foreign supplies of grain, she affords abundant provision for the inhabitants, and annually exports a considerable surplus. In 1829 the deficient harvest of France was recruited from the produce of Scandinavia; and in 1830, the ports of Malmo, Landscrona, and Wisby, alone, sent to England 32,500 tons of oats, and 3,000 of barley. . . . . At present it may be affirmed of the Swedish farmers in general, that they lead a quiet and laborious life, alike free from the depressions and elevations of fortune, enjoying an equal share of civil rights with the nobles, but paying a much heavier proportion of the national burdens. The number of proprietors in Sweden is reckoned at 923,000 individuals, or 322,000 families; but that of labourers is considerably greater in proportion, being estimated at 2,067,000, or seven-ninths of the whole population."

This was clear and distinct evidence of the advantages which had resulted from the adoption of a proper system of the cultivation of waste lands; and every Minister who wished to recommend himself to the popular favour of the people of Ireland must adopt some plan of this kind. If he rejected a system calculated to create such an improvement in the condition of the people, by the raising of a large body of rural proprietors, he did not believe that such a Minister would meet with a favourable reception from the majority of the Irish people. He was doubtful also as to the intentions, as regarded the welfare of Ireland, of the party with which the noble Lord had connected himself. That party had constantly supported a Government which was composed of elements which were opposed to the interests of Ireland. He did not allude to the noble Lord associating himself, in carrying out his plan, with the hon. Member for Limerick, but to his associating himself with their protagonists the Orangemen of Ireland. The people of Ireland must be satisfied that they were not sold for selfish purposes, or that those who proposed this plan had not done so from a desire to advance themselves. Before they got the confidence of the Irish people, they must show that they were prepared to bring forward other measures of a different nature, really for the benefit of Ireland. Was there a unanimity amongst the party opposite as to the question of the tenure of land—was there a unanimity as to giving compensation to the struggling peasant of Ireland for any improvement he had made in the land from which he might be ejected—was there a unanimity among them as to making the law less stringent towards the unfortunate peasantry—or was there a unanimity among them in favour of a measure which would tend more than any other that he was aware of to benefit the people—he meant a good and effective system of poor laws? He believed that this was the only means of making the absentees attend to the condition of the people. If they persisted in a system which made London the centre of government, and which caused a constant drain of the capital of Ireland from its natural sources, by inducing the gentry of Ireland to desert their native shores, they must take steps to make the landlords who so acted liable to the burden of maintaining those who had been deserted by their natural protectors. They would thus create a selfish feeling in the minds of the absentee landlords to promote the wellbeing of the peasantry on their estates. If the landlords would not attend to higher motives, their selfish feelings must be operated upon in such a way as ultimately to lead to the promotion of the welfare of the country. It had been said of the Irish, "Why do they not of their own accord, and by their own industry, become the founders of their own prosperity?" They were asked why they did not navigate their own rivers, and apply the powers of those rivers to the arts of manufacture and the creation of trade? They were asked why they did not use the means in their own hands for the elevation and improvement of their country, instead of looking for aid and assistance from others? The reasons why they did not do so, arose from the past centuries of misgovernment which they had endured having disorganised the natural order of things in Ireland. It was the result of that system of English government, which had ever arrayed the few against the many; and had sown discord between the two great elements of society—the aristocracy and the people of the country—for its own particular purposes. It was the consequence of that system of class legislation which had given to the few all the power in the land, and had ground down the multitude, of whom was the raw material of which nations were formed. He asserted that that system which had created antagonism between the few and the many, had prevented the population of Ireland from having that trust in each other, without which there could be no prosperity in the land. That it was which had prevented prosperity in Ireland. There was evidence of the fact to be found even in Ireland, where in the north they had seen happy homesteads in consequence of the existence of the tenant-right. But not alone to the system of class legislation was the misery of Ireland to be traced: there was, besides, the system of centralization, which had solely English objects for its view, and which had left no field in Ireland in which Irish enterprise could soar. Before concluding, he should return his thanks to the noble Lord the Member for Lynn, for his endeavours to assist the people of Ireland, and for the exhibition of a kindliness of feeling towards them which was calculated to inspire hopes of brighter prospects for the country. It was a good sign when they beheld the hon. Member for Sunderland supporting the proposition of the noble Lord—when they saw the Peer and the millionnaire united for the same object. He could not forget the noble sentiment uttered by the noble Lord, when stating the objects of his measure—that he, a Saxon, would stake his head upon the block for the loyalty of Ireland, if its industry were brought into play. It showed that he could depend upon the honour and loyalty of the people, if employment were offered to them, for the maintenance of the peace and the increase of the prosperity of Ireland.

Viscount BERNARD intended on that question, as he trusted on all others, to give an honest and independent vote. He returned his sincere thanks to the noble Lord (Lord G. Bentinck) for the able, comprehensive, and statesman-like measure which he had brought forward, and which would receive his warm and cordial support. He gave the measure his support, because he believed that it met in a great degree the present emergency; because it supplied what was deficient in the measures of Her Majesty's Government; and because he believed that it would most effectively lay the foundation of the future peace, happiness, and prosperity, and, he trusted, the future greatness of Ireland. In supporting the measure, he, for one, would not give his sanction to it if he thought it liable to the objections that had been, in his opinion, most unfairly urged against it. He should never give it his support if he did not believe that each of these railways would be subjected to the most scrutinizing investigation—that their merits would be correctly tested, and, so far from encouraging improper speculations, that the practical effect would be, that a greater scrutiny than ever would be applied to those measures. In his own (Lord Bernard's) neighbourhood, a railway was practically stopped for want of the necessary funds. All he asked was, that those who projected the railroad should be allowed to show to the Railway Commissioners that the speculation was a *bonâ fide* one, and was calculated to be of great benefit to that part of the country. Many hon. Members on the other side appeared not to understand the condition of Ireland. They treated it as if it were an agricultural country; but many of the parties who would be employed by these railways were shopkeepers and artisans. Now, all those persons were obliged to seek for employment on the public works; and if a proper and extensive system of railways was set on foot, the masons and tradesmen of all descriptions would be fully employed, and the small shopkeepers would participate in the benefits of the revived trade that would follow. He would support a measure that would facilitate the making of a railway to Cork. He was not going to quarrel with the first measure of the Government; he thought it was good as far as it went—it was one passed with the view of providing food for the Irish people. Speaking upon this subject, he had a letter in his pocket which he received from a gentleman residing in the western part of Ireland, which stated the appalling fact that there were 25,000 persons in that part of the country whose health was irretrievably ruined by the deficiency of food. He thought that much better measures might have been proposed by the Government to meet the impending calamity than those that they had already announced. He would now call the attention of the House to the measure for the advancement of loans of money to the Irish landlords. Now, he believed that as far as it went it was excellent; but it would be impossible for the Irish landlords, even with this assistance, to employ anything like the amount of labour in the market in agriculture, until the science was brought to much greater perfection than it at present was. There was a system connected with the employment of the people in Ireland that was extremely prejudicial to their interests; he alluded to the truck system, by which, instead of making money payments to the poor labourers, goods of various descriptions were handed to them. The right hon. Gentleman the Member for Portsmouth had that evening spoken against the measure of the noble Lord the Member for Lynn on grounds that he considered were arguments in favour of it. The fault in the Labour-rate Act was, that instead of great works being undertaken that would confer much public good upon the country, great competition was created by the work being brought to every man's door. The labourers consequently refused to go to those works of a permanent and beneficial nature, such as drainage, &c., because they would have had to travel some distance. In speaking of the Labour-rate Act, he hoped he should not be understood as joining in any general condemnation of it. Many charges were brought against the Board of Works for not doing things which if they even wished, they were wholly unable to do. The Irish gentleman was charged with throwing on the Board of Works the responsibility of deciding on the works under 10 Vic. 107, and with putting too many on the relief lists. With regard to the first charge, it should be recollected that the magistrates and cess-payers were required under this Act to do what had never before been done: by the Act of the right hon. Baronet (Sir R. Peel), an appeal was reserved for the county sessions; under 1 Vic. 21, the Board of Works were to determine as to the utility of the roads. Now, with respect to the first charge, it should be recollected that the decision in respect to these works was lodged in the hands of the Board of Works. They were going to have a measure introduced into Ireland, the merits of which he would not now discuss, inasmuch as an opportunity would soon be afforded him for entering more particularly on that subject; he alluded to the proposed poor law for Ireland. The Railway Commissioners Report for 1839, alluded to railways as a means of enabling the Irish proprietor to bear the pressure of the new burden of poor laws, and how much more necessary was it now when they had so large a population thrown on their hands for employment? He begged leave to call the attention of the House to what had been done in 1839; and in supporting the principle of the noble Lord the Member for

Lynn's measure, he would remind hon. Members that he was only taking a course that he had at all times followed. Though not a Member of the House, as far as a country gentleman could do by petitioning, he had supported the measure brought forward by the noble Lord the First Commissioner of Woods and Forests (Lord Morpeth) in 1839; and when the right hon. Baronet the Member for Tamworth (Sir R. Peel) afterwards came into power, the gentlemen of his part of the country with whom he acted were the first to present a petition to Earl de Grey, the then Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, in which they endeavoured to show the Government the absolute necessity of carrying out some such measure as had been proposed a short time before by the noble Lord (Lord Morpeth). He had attended meeting after meeting at that time with a view of pressing the subject upon the consideration of the Government. Those persons with whom he was then acting were not of that class who, it was said, had no other feeling but their interest in advocating such matters; but they were principally merchants of what was allowed to be the second commercial city in Ireland. He supported the measure of the noble Lord the Member for Lynn, from a conviction that it was the best calculated to meet the dreadful evils arising out of the present calamity, while he expressed his firm conviction that the calamity which it had pleased Providence to inflict on Ireland, was one which no human foresight could have avoided. He was also convinced, that if the measure proposed by the noble Lord the First Commissioner of Woods and Forests, in 1839, had been carried out, Ireland would, previous to the late calamity, have been in a far better condition than she was. The most distant part of Ireland would then have been brought within forty-eight hours of this country. There had been many just complaints made of the absentees of Ireland. He certainly knew some absentees who were as excellent men as ever existed. It was not, however, the large landed proprietor that by his absence inflicted great evils upon the country; but the numerous small landed proprietors, who, though not connected by any great territorial ties, yet by early associations were connected with the country—these were the persons who, by their residence in the fashionable watering-places of England, did injury to Ireland. By the introduction of railways, great facilities would be given to the intercourse between the two countries. He believed that this measure, if carried, would do more to bring these parties back to their country than any legislative measure that could be proposed upon the subject. It would be also most important to the Irish Members of this House, that instead of wasting so much of their time coming over here to their duties, they would be able to perform with comparative ease, both their duties as country gentlemen, and as representatives of their several constituencies in Parliament. He now wished to allude to two circumstances that had occurred at the period when the noble Lord the First Commissioner of Woods and Forests, in 1839, had brought forward his measure. In a speech of the noble Lord himself at that time, he referred to the enormous expense attending the formation of the Caledonian Canal:—

> "If we look," said the noble Lord, "at other countries united or connected with this, what has been the course pursued by the parent country towards those other countries? Large sums have been voted for the Caledonian Canal, for highland roads and bridges in Scotland, and for the Rideau and Ottawa Canals, and for canal communication in Canada. By a return of the sums voted in each year for these works from 1770 to 1839, I find that there has been voted for the Caledonian Canal the sum of 953,638*l*. for the highland roads and bridges in Scotland, 25,752*l*.; for military roads and bridges in Scotland, 241,918*l*.; and for the Rideau and Ottawa Canals, or for canal communication in Canada, 1,034,429*l*. After all this, I cannot think the application unreasonable to grant railways in Ireland—I will not say the gratuitous assistance—but the intervention of the State. It seems to have been a part of the past policy of the State, wherever in any portion of its dominions or dependencies it had reason to think there was a deficiency either of population or of capital, to make what it did not find. Wherever we pursue the inquiry, I think it will be found that the facility of intercourse and of communication has a marvellous tendency to reproduce and to multiply itself."*

According to the report, then, made in 1830, an expenditure of 200,000*l*. in Scotland, in fifteen years, had raised the condition of that country 100 years. He might add, that the town of Clifden in Galway, up to 1822, contributed no revenue; that in 1836 the revenue was 700*l*.; that from an expenditure in Connaught, in eleven years, of 160,000*l*. in public works, the increase in the revenue derivable, had become equal to the whole amount. In Cork, Mr. Griffiths expended 60,000*l*. in seven years; and there was stated to be an annual increase of customs and excise of 50,000*l*.

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* Hansard, Vol. xlv., p. 1063, Third Series.

The noble Lord then urged the adoption of a similar policy in Ireland. The right hon. Gentleman the Member for Portsmouth, who now complained of the effect which the carrying of this measure would produce upon the money market, had in 1839 proposed, in connexion with the noble Lord's measure, the issue of Exchequer-bills to the amount of 2,500,000*l.*; and it should be recollected what the state of the finances were in 1842. The right hon. Baronet (Sir R. Peel) had to provide for a deficiency of 10,000,000*l.* He would now refer to a speech made at that time by the hon. Member for Montrose (Mr. Hume), who, it would be recollected, had in 1839 represented Kilkenny in that House. The hon. Gentleman then said, that it appeared to him to be sound policy and wisdom for the Government to carry out a system of railways in Ireland—that the importance of such a measure would not be confined to Ireland, but England would be also greatly interested in the prosperity of the sister country, which was certain to result from such a course. The hon. Gentleman had then a most excellent opportunity of forming an opinion upon the subject, for doubtless he was then daily receiving letters from his constituents of Kilkenny—

> "Cœlum non animum mutant qui trans mare currunt."

The hon. Member for Montrose had at the former period urged very forcibly the formation of a railway from Dublin to Cork, which he thought would change very considerably the social state of the country, and would lay the foundation for the future prosperity of the country. Such a measure as this, he continued to observe, was worthy of a wise and great nation, and should not be opposed by any narrow and shortsighted system of economy. One thing appeared to him to be of great importance when considering a measure for the introduction of railways into Ireland. They did not stand in the same position as England. In England, the importance of the towns necessarily encouraged the construction of railways to connect them together, whereas in Ireland, the question was to which of the great seaports should they make the railway, because it was well known that by the construction of railways they would make their seaports of great importance. Upon that ground, he thought that the railways to all the great seaports in Ireland should be simultaneously made. With regard to the importance of the question of seaports, he would allude to a subject which he thought of the greatest importance. He believed that if a railway were made from Galway to Valentia, Ireland would become the great mart with Europe for American traffic. With regard to the position of Ireland, as a means of communication with America, Sir R. Kane says—

> "Lord Sheffield, whose acute judgment will be admitted, and who was certainly not biassed by Irish prejudices, notices the position in a passage which is amusingly candid."

He says, when speaking of the impolicy of repealing the navigation laws between England and Ireland, which was then clamorously demanded by this country—

> "Her object is to become the mart of Europe for the trade of America, for which she is so well suited, by her western position, immediately open to the ocean, and accessible almost with every wind; her vessels often crossing the Channel in a shorter time than the shipping of London require to clear the Channel. In addition, her ships can be victualled infinitely cheaper, and every necessary of life being low as well as public taxes, the general charge of conducting trade will be proportionably less."

Now, this object, which Lord Sheffield so much feared, is precisely what should be be the ambition of this country. He had urged this point upon the right hon. Baronet (Sir R. Peel) last year — that if he advanced the Government money for the formation of a railway from Dublin to Cork, there could not be a question as to the repayment; and he would secure the completion of the railway within two years; and in proportion as the works advanced, so would the prosperity of the country be secured and increased. In speaking of absenteeism in Ireland, he thought that the establishment of railways in Ireland would not only make the absentees do their duty, but also the Government of the country. The gentlemen of Ireland were frequently taunted for not employing more labourers, and for not preventing their going to the public roads; but the Government left themselves open to the charge of passing by property of their own, upon which labour could be very properly expended. He would ask the Ministers why they had embarked in Government works, and then refused to finish them? The First Lord of the Admiralty, in reply to a communication made to him on this subject, said, that as they had not money sufficient to make a naval dockyard in Cork, the English ones would be found sufficient. If a railway were to be once formed between Dublin and Cork, no Government would dare to refuse to carry on these naval undertakings. The report says—

> "The deficiency of supply, the want of boats, improved fishing-tackle, gear and skill, are mainly attributable to the want of a steady constant demand and remunerating price near the site of the fisheries; while on the other hand, the want of demand and price is chiefly caused by the remoteness of the districts, the want of quick and facile means of communication with good markets, and the total absence of an enterprising spirit of trade to establish curing stores, and, created on the spot, the steady markets for the fruits of the fisherman's labour. As regards the future, the construction of railways through the country, and the increase of steam navigation, will soon apply the necessary remedy."

It was said by some, "your railways will take about two years completion, and then there will be nothing for the people to do." On the contrary, Ireland abounded in sources of wealth; like the fabled golden branch, if you removed one, another sprung up:—

> "Uno avulso non deficit alter
> Aureus, et simili frondescit virga metallo."

And there had just been presented to the House by Her Majesty's Government a report upon the Irish fisheries, in which allusion was made to the importance of railways in Ireland, as eminently calculated to develop the resources of her fisheries—than which, Arthur Young once observed, there was nothing which could be of greater advantage to that country. But it was said that the money required to be advanced for the purpose of carrying out his noble Friend's plan, would be drawn from the hard-earned wages of the English people. Now, he believed that there never was so complete a fallacy as this. And he must say, that he gave the English people credit for not being influenced by such sophistries. All that the Bill proposed was, that the Government should lend its credit. But it was said, the landlords ought to contribute something, because they had a beneficial interest. Had the State then no beneficial interest in Ireland? Had not the revenue of Ireland gone on increasing yearly, in recent times? The increase in her customs and excise was very considerable. The effects of improving her roads were to prevent illicit distillation, to put down disturbances more easily and effectually, and to promote the general improvement of the country. Well, then, if such effects as these had arisen from improving the common roads, what might they not anticipate from the encouragement of railways there? He believed that it was only necessary to construct the railways in order to open up almost exhaustless sources of wealth. But at this moment especially, he would urge upon the House to do everything to save the lives of the people of Ireland. He believed that Parliament and the country would be amply repaid by the adoption of the Bill of the noble Lord the Member for Lynn. Yes, they would be repaid not merely by the cheers of the Members for Ireland in this House—not merely by the heartfelt gratitude and silent prayers which would ascend from many a humble cabin, now the abode of penury and misery, sickness, disease, and death; not merely would they cheer the last moments of many a poor labouring man borne down by insufficiency of food, with the thought that there was yet a ray of hope—a dawning of a brighter and a better day—a chance that in a land they loved, his children about to be fatherless might earn an honest livelihood, and support a widowed parent; but if those considerations were of no avail, they would be repaid in the increased revenue which Ireland would pour into the coffers of the Imperial Treasury; and should the day come, as come it might, when that *ignis fatuus* of free trade which they had been so blindly following, led them on to deceive them, should an export duty upon foreign corn and an import duty upon the manufactures of other countries cripple the industry of England; in Ireland, they would find, as their Commissioner told them in 1832, markets more important than those which they were seeking in America, and they would have the satisfaction of knowing that they had sown seed in Ireland which would be productive, at no distant day, of an harvest happy in the varied abundance of its agricultural produce, but happier still, in the more abiding fruits of harmony and peace.

Mr. CHAPLIN said, that he was induced to trespass upon the attention of the House thus early after becoming a Member of it, solely by the conviction of the vast importance of the subject under consideration. He had been exceedingly impressed by the great zeal and ability displayed by the noble Lord the mover of this Bill, in bringing forward a scheme so truly comprehensive, and so beneficial in every particular. In his opinion, with the noble Lord's measure, the measures of Her Majesty's Government would bear no comparison. He must also bear his testimony to the remarkable accuracy of the details and data produced by the noble

Lord. As far as he could judge of them, they were quite incontrovertible, and in every particular within bounds. He spoke from experience, and he did not hesitate to say, that Irish railways would be sure of success, both in their produce and in the security of the capital which might be embarked in them. But that, he thought, could not be observed with reference to the plans of the Government, because they were uncertain in their produce, and still more so in reference to the security of the capital. Much had been said with regard to commissions for public works; and he remembered when the commission, with Sir Henry Parnell at its head, was appointed for improving the public roads, that vast sums of money were lavished on the roads through Towcester and Daventry to Birmingham, and that at the very time when a railway was in course of construction that ran parallel with them. Railroads would eventually be made in Ireland, and thus the money spent on the common roads there would be lost, as was the case in the instance to which he referred. He had so far travelled most pleasantly with the noble Lord the Member for Lynn; but he regretted to say that here he must leave him. He thanked the noble Lord, however, and he hoped the country would thank him, for the skill, care, and ability which he had evinced in introducing the measure to the House. Now, the ground on which he (Mr. Chaplin) would take his stand was, he confessed, exceedingly tender ground; but he trusted, that his suggestions would not be deemed altogether unreasonable, or unworthy the notice of the House. He believed, that if the measure of the noble Lord were qualified, and if the Government would carry out part of the measure, it would prove vastly more beneficial to Ireland and the kingdom at large, than would the measures of the Government. He quite agreed with the hon. Gentlemen who had spoken in the course of this debate, that Government interference with private enterprise was a tender subject; but he thought at the same time that that interference might be so qualified as to render it endurable under the particular pressure to which Ireland was now subjected. By taking in hand the works only of this great scheme, the Government would have the opportunity of employing exactly whom they pleased. They could select for the carrying out of those works the districts which were most oppressed and most required assistance. They could pay the labourers as they pleased, either in food or money. They could, as was done in France with the public works, employ the labourers in the construction of railroads in seasons which were dull, or when their labour was not required in agricultural pursuits. And then, with reference to those fears, which he thought to be justly entertained, with regard to the financial condition of this country, the fear that the commercial interests of the country would suffer from too great a drain upon its capital and resources for the relief of Ireland, the Government, having the entire control and management of those works, could so regulate their progress and expenditure, that whilst they materially benefited Ireland, our own country would sustain no injury. Of this he felt quite certain. It must be allowed on all sides that the pressure was exceedingly severe; so severe, indeed, that it had already justified a very considerable expenditure of the public money. But the noble Lord had stated what he (Mr. Chaplin) thought was rather strange, that it was almost immaterial how the money was spent, so that it was spent. Surely, no Member of the House could doubt the efficacy of establishing railway communication in Ireland. Irish railways would produce immediate and permanent benefit. He hoped, therefore, that the qualification he had mentioned would justify the Government in going so far as to make the works. Having so done, he was convinced, as the noble Lord the Member for Lynn had stated himself to be, that the success of those undertakings would be certain and ample, and that there was sufficient enterprise and capital in this country to take the works out of the hands of Government, in a manner that would secure the return of the entire advances that might be made, and likewise develop the industrial and internal resources of Ireland to a degree that would elevate her to an equality with this country. The Government should have power to create everything, and all that need be sacrificed was a slight increase of the interest on the capital expended, an increase occasioned by a slight delay of the works. But, on the other hand, the expenditure to be avoided by abolishing the ridiculous costs at present incurred by going before the Standing Orders Committee, and other parliamentary and law expenses, which were now felt to be so oppressive a weight upon the promoters of railways in this country, would at once be a set-off to that portion of the expenditure which was consequent upon the increase of interest. Hon. Gentlemen would believe him when he assured them that there were instances of railways being made in America for less money than the parliamentary and law expenses amounted to in England. Therefore, although there might be some fear on the part of the railway interest with regard to the coercive parts of the measure of his right hon. Friend the Member for Derby (Mr. Strutt), still they felt they had reason to expect so much alleviation with regard to the reduction of the preliminary expenses from his judicious care, that they would be justified in bearing some of his measures with good temper. The calculations which had been laid before the House by the noble Member for Lynn, were, he thought, close enough for all useful purposes. When railways were formed in this country at the rate of from 12,000*l*. to 50,000*l*., and even 60,000*l*. a mile, he conceived that there must be margin enough to meet all speculative arguments upon the subject of difference in details and expenses. And, he believed, that all practical men who were versed in the question of railways, and the expenses of their construction, fully and entirely relied on the soundness, propriety, and justice of the noble Lord's measure.

Sir C. NAPIER thought the House was now in a complete fix. He had listened with great pleasure to the eloquent speech of the noble Lord the Member for Lynn, who had said, with great justice and fairness, "You have advanced 1,000,000*l*. for the Caledonian Canal—you have advanced money for the Caledonian Canal—and why should you refuse money in the present instance?" The noble Lord had suggested Cork as a proper place for a naval station; and such stations would be beneficial alike to the Navy, to Ireland, and to the country at large. But the question at the present moment was, whether the project of the noble Lord at the head of Her Majesty's Government should be adopted, or the project of the noble Lord the Member for Lynn, to advance 16,000,000*l*. He said that was the question. The noble Lord at the head of Her Majesty's Government had stated, that if the noble Lord the Member for Lynn succeeded in getting the assent of the House to his plan, he must come forward and assume the Government. If that plan would benefit Ireland, if the noble Lord could form and carry on an Administration, he (Sir C. Napier) would vote for his measure, even at the risk of turning out the present Government. But he was convinced that the plan would not answer the end proposed; he was convinced the noble Lord could not form a Government; and he was more than convinced that if the noble Lord did form an Administration, he could not carry it on. Those were the reasons why he opposed the plan of the noble Lord. He should like to know who were the labouring people that would be employed to work on these railways? It would be the business of the proprietors to select strong and efficient men to execute them. He begged to ask his right hon. Friend the Lord Mayor of York (Mr. Hudson), who would probably have a great concern in these railways—there was not the smallest doubt of that—what would be his duty? Not to look after the starving people of Ireland. He was bound in duty to those who employed him to select the best and strongest men he could find to carry on the works. It was stated by Gentlemen from Ireland, that the people there were reduced so low, that they were not fit for really good work. If the right hon. Gentleman found they were not able to work, it would be his duty to send to England for experienced labourers. ["No, no!"] Hon. Gentlemen said "No;" but he said "Yes." It was the duty of railway directors to find the best and strongest men for their work, without any regard whatever to the starving people of Ireland. An hon. Friend reminded him that, in France, English labourers were employed on the railways; and if in France, where they hated Englishmen as much as it was possible for one set of men to hate another—["No!"]—they certainly did not like them—they were forced to employ labourers whom they found not certainly the most sober, the self-same thing might occur, were the attempt to establish railroads in Ireland prosecuted, when it was found that the native labourers were not sufficiently strong for the work. If the noble Lord the Member for Lynn could bring forward any better scheme for saving Ireland from starvation, he should give it his best support. Ireland was in a state horrible to be thought of—impossible to be described. The calamity was an infliction from Divine Providence, which Ireland could not avoid. Notwithstanding the distress in Scotland, and also in England, it was the duty of this country and of the House of Commons to come forward and alleviate the distress of Ireland. Suppose a calamity like the plague or the great fire were again to desolate this city—if half London were burnt out and starving in the streets—would any Government be able to say, "We will not give relief to those starving people?" Ireland was more distant, but the claim was not less imperious. Great abuse had been thrown in that House upon the Irish landlords. He did not believe they deserved blame to the extent which was stated. The hon. Member for Inverness, in his very excellent speech, had remarked that the people of Scotland, when distress appeared, did not fold their hands, but set on foot plans for relieving the poor. But Scotland was not in the same situation as Ireland. Estates were not so embarrassed; the population were more energetic, enterprising, and easy to manage. The proprietors borrowed money, which the Government advanced; they cultivated their land better, and reaped the benefit. But, were the Irish proprietors in the same situation? He understood that many of their estates were embarrassed; that they let out their land in small patches; and that, the food of the people being entirely destroyed, the landlords could not get their rents. Embarrassed as they were, and not receiving their rents, he would ask hon. Gentlemen to consider how it was possible for them to relieve the poor, in the present great calamity, in a manner similar to that pursued in organized countries like England and Scotland? He believed that the Irish landlords had been unjustly accused. If they had not been unjustly accused, and if they did not do their duty, it was the business of the Government to propose laws to compel them to do their duty; and he understood that a poor law, and other laws, would be brought forward, with the view of assuaging the misery existing in Ireland, and for the purpose of protecting the country from its future recurrence.

Mr. HUDSON was sure he would receive the indulgence of the House while he addressed to them a few observations on the present question. He should not think it consistent with the dignity of the House, or with the position he occupied in it, to attempt to reply to the observations which had been made relative to him personally, in connexion with railways. He had been actuated by the purest motives of single-heartedness to serve his country and benefit Ireland, by the part he had taken with respect to this measure. The gallant Admiral had said that he might take a prominent part in the management of those railways. It must be sufficiently well known to the House, that the calls upon his time, and the responsibility which attached to those calls, would be sufficient to excuse him from embarking in those concerns; and he was sure the House and the country would believe him when he stated, that if this measure were so fortunate as to receive the sanction of the House, any advice or information which he could give towards the carrying of it out, would be given freely and voluntarily; but as to taking a single share or interest in them, he would do nothing of the kind. Gentlemen connected with those undertakings were frequently and unceremoniously charged with having entered upon them merely for gain—for obtaining wealth for themselves. Now, he could say for himself, and he thought he might add for almost every gentleman connected with railways, that they had not entered into those undertakings merely for the purpose of gain, but from public motives, from a knowledge that they would be useful to the country. He should now endeavour to apply himself to the speeches delivered by the right hon. Gentleman the Chancellor of the Exchequer, and by the right hon. Member for Portsmouth (Mr. F. T. Baring). As far as he (Mr. Hudson) could ascertain, there were but two points on which the right hon. Gentleman had doubted the statements of the noble Member for Lynn—namely, the number of men that would be employed on the lines, and the amount of money that would be expended in labour. As far as he could remember, those two were the only points questioned by the right hon. Gentleman the Chancellor of the Exchequer; and since then they had been taunted by the right hon. Member for Portsmouth for not having replied to the objections made in those respects to the plan of the noble Member for Lynn. He did not know on what authority the Chancellor of the Exchequer had made his statement, as to the amount of money that would be expended in labour; but he wondered it had not occurred to the right hon. Member for Portsmouth, that even upon the Chancellor of the Exchequer's own showing, that the right hon. Gentleman must have made a gross mistake. The right hon. Gentleman seemed to have forgotten that, under the Bill of the noble Lord the

Member for Lynn, for every 4,000,000*l*. which the Government would have to provide, the railway companies would provide 2,000,000*l*. more. Now, the right hon. Gentleman (Mr. Baring) allowed 25 per cent for earthworks; but he only allowed that 25 per cent on the 4,000,000*l*., which would make 1,000,000*l*. to be devoted to earthworks; whereas he ought to have allowed it on the 6,000,000*l*., which would have made the amount 1,500,000*l*. So that, by his own showing, the right hon. Gentleman was at least wrong in regard to that point. Now, he (Mr. Hudson) would give figures which would clearly show that the noble Lord's calculation was below the average amount in regard to labour, and that, instead of 1,500,000*l*., it would be nearly 4,000,000*l*. that would be expended under that head under his plan. Take, for instance, the expenses in constructing the North Midland Railway. That line cost, on the average, 40,000*l*. per mile. The land cost 5,500*l*. per mile; the permanent way cost between 5,000*l*. and 6,000*l*. per mile, and the parliamentary expenses about 2,000*l*. There was an expenditure of, say, 13,000*l*. per mile; and to what did the right hon. Gentleman suppose the remaining 27,000*l*. were devoted? That was a line of great expense and large works; but there was the York and North Midland, a line of comparatively small expense and small works, and that line cost an average of 23,000*l*. per mile; the land having cost not more than 1,800*l*. per mile, and the permanent way 5,500*l*. Now, he wanted to know in what the remainder was spent? Why. undoubtedly, in labour. In the Leeds and Bradford, again—a more recently constructed line—of which the expense had been 33,000*l*. per mile, there had been 17,000*l*. per mile to be calculated on the side of labour. The permanent way included sleepers and other things connected with the works. They might, perhaps, say there was a great consumption of bricks; but they could not make bricks without the employment of much labour—and with such facts as these before them, how was it possible they could doubt the accuracy of the statements of the noble Lord who had brought forward this measure, and that the right hon. Gentleman the Chancellor of the Exchequer was grossly mistaken. The right hon. Gentleman, too, had said that the number of men per mile was about twenty-five or thirty; but on the Orleans line there were as many as 130 per mile. He really thought the right hon. Gentleman ought to be better informed before he came down to the House and impugned the statements of other Gentlemen. The right hon. Gentleman had also spoken of the monetary question, and had had some communication, evidently, with a late Chancellor of the Exchequer (Mr. Baring). That right hon. Gentleman undertook to discuss this question of raising the money; and he must say he was astonished to hear what he stated on that head, when he considered that he (Mr. Baring) had voted, but a few years ago, for raising a loan of 5,000,000*l*. He had said that he doubted at the time whether that sum could be raised; but it was natural enough that he should have done so, for these railway matters were not at that time so well understood as they were at present. Besides, what was the state of the bullion at the Bank at that time? And yet the right hon. Gentleman, in the present state of the finances of the country, said that they who were the promoters of this Bill were guilty of a measure which shocked him much, when he himself, in a time of great difficulty, was ready to ask for a vote of 5,000,000*l*. The right hon. Gentleman who did this now came forward and blamed them for a Bill which involved an outlay of 16,000,000*l*., which were to be spread over a period of four years. He thought he had, however, given an answer to those two right hon. Chancellors of the Exchequer. In respect to the question before the House, he would assure them it was one on which he had felt strongly for a long time past, and though he should not have dared to presume to have brought it before the House, yet he was convinced that it involved one of the great means of raising the social condition of Ireland, and of giving to that distracted and discontented country, peace, contentment, and happiness; and having received the invitation of the noble Lord the Member for Lynn to assist him in the collection of facts, and in furnishing him the means of bringing this measure before Parliament, he felt that in having done so he had only done his duty to his country; and though he should regret the rejection of this Bill by the House, he certainly should ever rejoice at the course which he had considered it right to pursue. The Chancellor of the Exchequer had told them that the security, too, was questionable. He did not think that was a prudent speech, and he regretted that part of this debate, because he did think that whatever means could be employed to secure that for Ireland which had done so much good to this country, would be conferring a lasting benefit. It would be presumptuous in him to differ on some subjects from the Chancellor of the Exchequer; but there might be some things as to which he, from circumstances, might have the opportunity of obtaining more information; and so perfectly secure did he feel that these investments were good, that he would be disposed to pledge the whole of his property that not one sixpence of the money would be lost; speaking, of course, with this qualification that there should not be a reckless and indiscriminate expenditure and bad management. With proper safeguards, he was sure that these investments were secure, and would tend to the benefit of the country. No man knew better than did the hon. Member for Bolton how much depended on management, and that one man would make productive that which would fail in the hands of another. He considered it was very unfair to draw comparisons between this measure and those which had been brought forward by the noble Lord. The promoters of the measure had never said that it was brought forward in opposition to those Bills; on the contrary, it was intended rather as an auxiliary to them. One of those measures was for the improvement and reclamation of waste lands; but they should begin at the right end—first, construct their roads, and then they would be able to reclaim their lands at half the expense. In regard to drainage, too—a thing of the first importance—he was prepared to consider this measure as a sort of superstructure for that and similar measures. Many improvements would arise from giving Government the means of assisting private exertions and property; and, in regard to the money required, he had no doubt that the Government would have no difficulty in obtaining it. He was as convinced of this as he was that he had a seat in that House. A few months ago, companies with which he was connected, created a capital of 10,000,000*l.* in one month; and six days after the calls, which were for ten per cent, were made, there were not 25*l.* of arrears. He had no doubt this money might be obtained. There were large sums of money that could not be invested in anything but Government securities, and there was ever a large surplus to invest in them; and, for his own part, he did not believe that the funds would be affected to the extent of a quarter per cent if they were to go into the market and raise the whole of this money at once. Again, they had appointed a Railway Board, composed of gentlemen receiving large—though he was sure he did not think too large—salaries; and surely those commissioners could manage a business like that which would arise under this measure. He was sure that, with the intelligence and good judgment of the hon. Gentleman (Mr. Strutt) who presided over that board, there would be no difficulty in regard to the selection of the lines, and in ascertaining that the security was good. Having ascertained that the security was good, he believed that there was not one hon. Gentleman at all acquainted with the subject who would not say that the establishment of railways would be most advantageous to Ireland. Then they should remember that they were expending in this country, for the last four years, in railway undertakings, at the rate of 15,000,000*l.* a year. He was sure he could not rate the outlay at less than 15,000,000*l.* a year. When this was the case, surely they could spare four millions and a half in the year, in a country which was calling for something to be done for its benefit, and to mitigate its evils. Ireland had been to this country a constant source of anxiety—Government after Government had declared it to be their "great difficulty." They had been cobbling and peddling with Ireland; but they had attempted ineffectually to develop its resources. If they did so now—or if they had done so before—they would have Ireland, instead of being their difficulty, one of their strong arms; it would be so by raising their social character, and improving the condition of the people. Why, there was none of them that knew anything about Ireland. They were legislating for a country with which many of them were totally unacquainted. Let there be given, as proposed by this measure, the means of ready access—let the communication be facilitated—and there were very few Members of that House who would not be found visiting Ireland once or twice in the year. He believed that if this measure had been left to be judged of by the Members for Ireland—he believed that if, instead of being legislated upon in this country, it were to be decided in Dublin, there would be a unanimous expression in its favour. If that then were so, what an argument would they furnish to the hon. Member for Cork (Mr. O'Connell) for a repeal of the Union, should they refuse to entertain a question in support of which Irishmen would be found unanimous. They had the opinion of the hon. Member for Salisbury (Mr. Chaplin); they had the hon. Member's judgment, and the judgment of every man of talent and experience, that the plan proposed could be effected with perfect security. Why, then, did they refuse? He said that they furnished an argument, a strong argument, to the hon. Member for Cork, if they refused to concede this great and important measure to Ireland—one which might be regarded as one of the greatest benefits to that country. Why, he asked, was Ireland a most unfortunate country? Why was she distressed? Because her resources were neglected; because her means of improvement were not developed. Did they know the full value of railways to agricultural produce? He said that they could scarcely make a railroad in any country that was at all civilized, in which it would not be found that the produce of the land would pay uncommon interest on that railway. This, he said, was a statement that would be confirmed by every man of common experience in railways. But, then, it was said by the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what security was there for the money advanced upon railways? Why, he had rails; he might be able to sell them. They would be one-third of the security. As to the money market, he was quite sure that there no hesitation would be felt as to the security; and if properly managed there could be as little doubt that the railways in Ireland would be productive. The right hon. Chancellor of the Exchequer had next remarked that none but able-bodied labourers would be employed upon railways. He could say that boys of nine, ten, twelve, and fourteen years of age, were very largely employed on railways. But surely, if none but able-bodied labourers were employed, that in itself would be doing a great deal of good, and especially so at a time when they were told that they were employing half a million of able-bodied labourers. Would it be no advantage, if instead of paying 150,000*l.* a month—as the Chancellor of the Exchequer said they were paying to able-bodied labourers—they had no such money to pay, and yet be certain that they were fully and profitably employed? Assuredly that alone would be a vast advantage. Then, there was another consideration. They could not give employment to able-bodied men without benefiting the whole mass of the population. The Chancellor of the Exchequer had much alarmed him by the manner in which he had introduced his remarks upon one part of the Bill; and when the clause was read, he (Mr. Hudson) did take a little blame to himself for introducing it. That clause secured to parties who had lent money to the present railways the power to take their money back if they thought proper. He knew that parties who lent money had often great objections to Government interference: he did not think they would do so in this instance; but it was only fair that, if they did object, they should have the power of taking back one half of their money. This did not advantage the shareholder, but the man who had advanced money on the railways. The clause was framed to meet an extreme case: it would perhaps have been better left out; but he (Mr. Hudson) had felt a great anxiety to obviate all chances of doubt or dissatisfaction. The House looked gravely at a sum like 16,000,000*l.* for Ireland; but not long ago Parliament had, by an almost unanimous vote, given 20,000,000*l.* to the slaveholders, and the country cordially approved of that grant: but that was an unproductive grant—it was given away; while, in asking for this money for railways, they were not seeking compensation. They wanted the present grant to save the people of Ireland from immediate starvation, and permanently to advance their social condition; and it could not therefore be compared to a grant for the abandonment of a disgraceful traffick in human blood. They asked for the money for a great public improvement, which would enable them to bestow vast advantages upon Ireland without any loss to themselves. He was fully confident of that; he pledged himself that there would be no loss. He could assure the House that he had endeavoured in all the statements he had made, to adhere closely to what he believed to be the facts and truth of the case. As he had said before, he had no personal interest in the measure, and had no wish to participate in any of its advantages. He trusted the measure would be discussed without any personal imputations upon any one. The measure, he was sure, would prove beneficial to the country; and he felt great satisfaction and pride in the reflection that he had assisted the noble Lord in bringing it forward. He did, however, regret exceedingly that Her Majesty's Government objected to pass this measure; if they objected to the details, they might have altered it. He and his friends would not have objected. They might have put in 8,000,000*l.* instead of 16,000,000*l.*; they might have altered the clauses as they thought proper. The right hon. Member for Portsmouth had found great fault with the Bill. He had said he never saw such a Bill. What did the right hon. Gentleman expect—did he expect it would contain some new principle? He (Mr. Hudson) thought it a merit that it did not propound any new principle. Hitherto railways had been left, and he thought wisely left, to private enterprise. They did not possess, like France, a Government machinery to carry out such undertakings; and he thought it most wise to adhere to the principles hitherto acted on in this country, and call in the aid of Government to the assistance of private enterprise. He did not know whether the right hon. Gentleman had read the Railway Bill introduced by the right hon. Member for Derby. That Bill authorized Parliament to regulate the fares every ten years; and, of course, they would have the power also of regulating the Irish railways. The Chancellor of the Exchequer had objected to the details of the Bill; but his desire had been first to secure to the Government the repayment of their outlay, and then to secure the railways to Ireland. The Chancellor of the Exchequer had said something about the measure being more feasible had it been confined to a few mail lines, which might have been productive. He (Mr. Hudson) could give many instances in which public opinion had been in fault as to the results of different lines before they were completed; and he had no doubt that the proposed execution of the various lines in Ireland would put an end to scenes which had occurred and were occurring there, which were a disgrace to the Government and to Ireland; and all the enjoyments of peace, content, and social happiness, would be given to the people. He did not see why Ireland should not rise to a position equal to that of England. Was there anything in its climate, its soil, its productions, to prevent its rising to a most influential position? If this measure were carried, the union between the two countries would be cemented; they would be united by the strongest ties of attachment; the character of the country would be raised; and she would be enabled to enjoy a fair share of those advantages and blessings England possessed so abundantly. He had done his best to assist his noble Friend; and he was proud of the concurrence and support of their Friends in the House. He knew he had the concurrence of the whole of the railway world—which viewed the undertaking as a certain means of benefiting the two countries. It was useless to contend the benefits would exclusively belong to Ireland; for if Ireland were benefited, England was also benefited. If the north of Ireland were benefited, so was the south, and the benefit would be felt in every part of the country. The hon. Gentleman had mentioned the Dublin and Kingstown Railway as a particular case, which did not apply as a general example, on account of its locality; but if that railway were advantageously situated, it was constructed at a large cost, and so that unusual cost made up for its peculiar situation. The promoters of the measure had stated the average cost of making railways in Ireland to be 16,000*l.* per mile; but he did not think it would be anything like that amount. They were bound, however, to take the estimate submitted to Parliament as the groundwork of their calculations; but he staked his experience that the sum stated would be far above the reality. If that were so, there was another argument against the Chancellor of the Exchequer. He regretted the course the Government had taken, though he confessed he had no right to find fault; they had a perfect right to take that course if they conscientiously believed it to be the right one. Indeed they were indebted to the noble Lord at the head of the Government for the candid spirit in which he had met the Bill. He deeply regretted that they had had no pledge from the Government that they would, supposing the present measure to be thrown out, carry one something similar. If so, they should have his support for such a measure—his disinterested support, for he could have no personal interests to serve. He was quite contented with the throne on which he sat.

Mr. GOULBURN could assure the right hon. Gentleman who had just sat down, that he did not aspire to the throne on which he sat: still less was he inclined to impute improper motives to him for the part he had taken in the preparation of this measure. He gave him credit for having done so, in the sincere belief that he was lending his efforts to contribute to the welfare of the sister kingdom, now afflicted with the deepest calamity that could afflict a nation. He admitted, also, that the right hon. Gentleman was a great authority on all questions connected with railways, and he would willingly bow to him on any point of detail on which discussion might arise. But he deduced from the example of the right hon. Gentleman himself the strongest reason for opposing the Bill. The right hon. Gentleman told them that by his constant attention he had succeeded in establishing in England a complete system of railways, managed with economy by private companies, and producing results the most favourable to those who had invested their capital in them, and to the counties through which they passed. He told them, that in the execution of these projects there had been no difficulty whatever in raising by voluntary contributions the enormous sums by means of which those great objects were achieved. When, therefore, the hon. Gentleman told them how these objects were attained in undertakings with which he was connected, he furnished to his mind the strongest proof that Parliament had committed no error in trusting these great efforts to individual exertions, rather than by interference and loans of public money inducing persons to embark in them. And what was the difference between Irish and English railroads? Were they to suppose that Irish railroads were made by Irish capital alone, and that English railroads were made by capital exclusively English? Was that the ground on which they were to proceed in the discussion? If it were, the House should know that those views were altogether ill-founded. The House had had before them in a previous Session a statement of the names of those persons who had embarked money to a specified amount in different railroads in the two parts of the United Kingdom. Those returns showed the residences and country of those who had contributed their capital to the performance of these undertakings. And what was the result? Why the result was, that of the total amount of money there stated to have been subscribed for the construction of railways in Ireland, three-fourths of the whole was contributed not by Irish proprietors, but by the moneyed interest in England—by persons who embarked equally in railways in Scotland and England, and were prepared no doubt to apply to the conduct of railways in Ireland the same exertions, the same economy, the same superintendence which the right hon. Gentleman had shown were perfectly effective for the establishment of a complete railway system in England. If, therefore, the right hon. Gentleman found private exertions sufficient on the part of our capitalists for conducting railway operations here, on what grounds did he suppose, if these works would be really productive of public and private benefit, that the same individuals who had applied their money to railroads in England and Scotland, would not by similar exertions, and without assistance from Parliament, produce the same effect in Ireland? He said, then, there was *primâ facie* evidence against the course the right hon. Gentleman recommended. Now he agreed with the right hon. Gentleman, that this discussion was in some degree unfortunate; that it was impossible to enter upon the question of establishing railways in Ireland, and to discuss the probability of their success, without impairing the credit of some of them, and thus throwing difficulties in the way of completing the undertakings brought under discussion. But who was responsible for that? Not those who resisted a measure so novel in itself, but those who, without due consideration of what would affect the money market of the country, and the speculation in these particular railways, brought forward the measure, and called for an opinion which it was impossible to express without in some degree hazarding the success of those undertakings. The question before the House was one which, in a pecuniary point of view, was of no trifling character, nor could they consider it solely with regard to the amount, large as it might be, which they were required to provide. The Bill called for 16,000,000*l.*; but who could suppose that the expenditure of this sum could relieve them from the obligations imposed upon them of providing for those portions of the community for whom the Bill would afford no relief? Difference had existed as to the precise amount of expenditure on a railway which was applied to manual labour. But deal with it as they pleased—state what proportion of the money they pleased as applicable to manual labour—were the statements of the Chancellor of the Exchequer correct, or those of the right hon. Gentleman who spoke last? Let half, as the right hon. Gentleman affirmed, be expended on earthwork, or only one quarter, as was stated by the Chancellor of the Exchequer, still the question remained the same—what were they to do with that portion of the population of Ireland, who, by distance from the line of railroad, by age or infirmity, were incapacitated to perform the work required? What were they to do with that portion of the population, even if they adopted the measure the right hon. Gentleman recommended? Why, they must resort to measures similar to that the Government called upon them to adopt; they must incur the expenditure the Chancellor of the Exchequer foreshadowed, and the proposition for which would be before them in the course of a fortnight; they must incur this tremendous expense in the course of the ensuing year, and it must be added to the 16,000,000*l.* the noble Lord now called on them to furnish. The noble Lord told them that 4,000,000*l.* only would be required in the present year? But to that you must add the 6,000,000*l.* or 7,000,000*l.* necessary for the relief of the destitute, and must provide in the course of the present year 11,000,000*l.* of money, with the certainty that for the three succeeding years at least 4,000,000*l.* more would be necessary; nor had any one yet satisfied the House that the completion of the Irish railways would not cost more than the 16,000,000*l.* at which they were estimated. The right hon. Gentleman taunted the hon. Member for Portsmouth, because in 1839, he was prepared to advance 5,000,000*l.* in spite of a deficiency in the revenue of 1,400,000*l.*, and said it was, therefore, unreasonable to refuse the advance asked for, when the surplus revenue exceeded 2,000,000*l.* But the argument derived from the existing surplus was of no avail, if this expenditure for Ireland was defrayed out of it. They knew by the last return that there was something short of 3,000,000*l.* surplus revenue, and they knew also that 6,000,000*l.* or 7,000,000*l.* must be raised for the purpose of alleviating the awful calamity with which Providence had now afflicted us. Therefore, so far from dealing at the present moment with a surplus revenue—so far from being in a better situation than they were in 1839, when the then Chancellor of the Exchequer agreed to a loan for a totally different purpose, the present moment was likely to be one of much more financial embarrassment. It had been assumed in the debate, that those who resisted this measure were opposed to the establishment of railways in Ireland. He begged altogether to disclaim that feeling. He believed that railways, when not prematurely pressed, but resulted from private enterprise, were the greatest benefit that could be conferred upon any country. But his argument was, that we ought not to depart from that principle upon which we had always acted hitherto with respect to such works. It had been hitherto successful—it would continue to be successful if carried out as it had been; more successful than in other countries where public works had been attempted to be carried out in a different manner. He did not deny that there were cases in which a Government might afford their assistance with very considerable advantage; but coming into the field of individual enterprise, for the purpose of superseding such enterprise, was a measure inexpedient in itself, and not likely to lead to a successful result. The right hon. Gentleman who had last addressed the House, had told them that prudence and economy in the management of railways were the real secrets which led to success; but it had ever been found, that money furnished by Government was always dealt with in a more extravagant manner, than money which belonged to a private purse; a manager of a concern under such circumstances, was ever more careful than when he was dealing with that which was partially the money of the Government. In estimating the probable success of the measure, he did not think that the railway alluded to in the early part of the evening (the Kingstown) was one which could be fairly taken as a criterion of Irish railways. There was another railway in Ireland—the Dublin and Drogheda, which appeared to him to furnish a better criterion. That was an established railway, of which twenty-four miles ran through a county the most thriving in Ireland; one which opened a communication with the north, where the manufacturing interest was rising, and where great industry prevailed—a railway which ought, on ordinary principles of calculation, to be as certain of success as any one in that country. The shares in it were of 75*l.* each; of which 70*l.* had been paid up, and within the last ten days he had seen that the shares had been sold in the market for 58*l.*, thus showing, at all events, a slight indication of the amount of profit made upon that line. Doubts were expressed whether the value of the shares was a just measure of railway success. He undoubtedly understood that the value of shares in a railway was dependent upon the interest paid on the money subscribed; and if that was the case, then that line was evidently not a very profitable one.

An hon. and learned Gentleman who addressed the House early in the evening, was anxious to prove to the House that we might without financial risk embark in this expenditure, because money borrowed by the State, was not money belonging to the State. He, for one, could not follow the hon. and learned Gentleman in his argument, nor could he at all enter into the distinction which he drew. The hon. and learned Gentleman had referred to America in illustration of his argument, where money was borrowed for the purpose of constructing railways. If the hon. and learned Gentleman meant to imply that we in England were to pursue the same course with respect to the money borrowed for the purpose of making railways, as had been pursued by the people of America, then he (Mr. Goulburn) could very well understand his argument, and that the money so borrowed would not be the money of the State, but that it would be that of the unfortunate individuals who had been deluded out of it. He was not disposed to pay the hon. and learned Gentleman so bad a compliment as to argue for a moment that he had mentioned America in regard to her railways as a precedent for adoption here; therefore he could not draw the distinction which the hon. and learned Gentleman was so anxious to lay down between spending one's own money, and money which had been borrowed. The hon. and learned Gentleman said, that that was not a question affecting the payer of taxes; but was not the hon. and learned Gentleman aware that if the State borrowed money with the intention of repaying it, they must provide for the payment, at least, of the interest upon the sum borrowed, until the repayment had been made, and that therefore a burden would be imposed upon the public by an annual charge for such interest until the railroads were completed, because until that period they would not be productive? If they were to pay the interest otherwise than from the produce of taxes, the payment could only be made out of the money actually advanced by the Government; and that mode of borrowing money to pay interest must ultimately operate most prejudicially, and cause both loss to the country, and greatly increased burdens on the people. He confessed that his expectations of a successful result from this measure, had been damped by what had fallen from the right hon. Gentleman who last addressed the House. He said, that if at the end of thirty years the money was not repaid by the railway companies, then the Government might sell the iron rails. Evidently the right hon. Gentleman had no very sanguine hope of the repayment of the money, when he made such a suggestion as that the right hon. Chancellor of the Exchequer should become a dealer in old iron. For his own part, he believed that, in a financial point of view, of all things the most dangerous was for the country to embark in time of peace in a system of raising loans to a large amount for any object whatever. He admitted that it was a prudent course for a Government to pursue, to reserve a sum out of the annual revenue, for the purpose of assisting great works which would be beneficial to the country; but once begin the system of making advances out of borrowed money, to supersede individual exertions, and not a year would elapse before they were called upon to aid other undertakings, which either had equal claims to assistance, or might be made to appear equally promising and equally advantageous, as affording employment for the people, as those now advocated by the noble Lord the Member for Lynn; and they would be compelled to embark in an extensive system of loans, for the purpose of creating works which would be much better carried out by individual enterprise. He felt bound to say that the right hon. Gentleman (Mr. Hudson) had entirely failed in showing that the measure he supported so warmly, would lead to any great relief of that destitution which unfortunately pressed so heavily on Ireland. There might be some excuse for adopting an erroneous principle for the purpose of affording relief for a great impending calamity; but that would not be the result of the measure before the House. The railroads to be made, must be limited to particular districts; and, as he understood the right hon. Gentleman, even before a single line was commenced, an extensive, because thorough, examination of the nature of the line, its prospects of traffic, &c. was to be made, in order to see whether it would be a sufficient security for the money to be advanced for its completion. It must be shown to give some prospect of being profitable before any advance was made. That inquiry, if it were to be effective, involved delay—delay which might be indefinitely protracted, and consequently the measure could prove no remedy for the existing state of things in Ireland; it would be wholly inefficient as a measure of immediate relief. Under these circumstances he could have no hesitation in recording his vote against the second reading of the Bill. He thought the hon. Gentlemen were in error, who said the want of capital was the great evil existing in Ireland. If the people of that country would only exert their natural energy—if they would apply themselves, as did the people of England, to the accumulation of capital—both energy and money would be found amongst them to complete all these undertakings. He had shown that a great part of the capital subscribed for these Irish railways had been subscribed by English capitalists. They were experienced in undertakings of that nature; and although they were now unwilling to advance the money which they had engaged to contribute for them, he saw in that no reason why they should be relieved from paying up the necessary calls upon those shares for which they had contracted. On the contrary, they ought to carry out those works which they had sought powers to make, and which had been granted to them by Parliament; nor would an advance be made to one railway without in many cases a manifest injustice. If they took the Dublin and Galway Railway, for instance, and declined to take another parallel line in the same direction, an injury would not alone be done to the railway which was rejected, but a public wrong effected by the paralysation of competition. On these grounds, therefore, he should oppose the Motion.

Debate adjourned.

NAVIGATION LAWS.

Mr. RICARDO rose to nominate the Select Committee on the Navigation Laws, viz.—Mr. Ricardo, Mr. Alderman Thompson, Mr. Hume, Sir Robert Peel, Mr. Milner Gibson, Mr. Hutt, Sir George Clerk, Mr. Brownrigg, Mr. Bright, Mr. M'Carthy, Viscount Sandon, Mr. Brown, Mr. Lyall, Mr. Mitchell, and Mr. Thomas Baring.

On the Motion that Mr. Ricardo be a member of the Committee,

Mr. WAWN wished to know whether the Government had given their assent to the names on the Committee, and whether they considered it a fair selection?

Lord J. RUSSELL did not know of any objection to the names of the Committee. He certainly, on the part of the Government, wished it to be a fair and an honest Committee; and if the hon. Gentleman could make a valid objection to any one of them, he would have no hesitation in changing it.

Major BERESFORD, looking at the names of the Committee, could not but perceive the *animus* of their appointment. It was not, in his opinion, a just and honest Committee; and he had no hesitation in saying that it was appointed as it was sought for, to extend and establish the principles of free trade, and sweep away the only remnant of protection that existed. There were twelve free-traders on it, and only three protectionists. It was packing a jury; hanging first, and trying afterwards. The House, however, would not accept those names; and unless the Government interposed, he should move the substitution of others.

Mr. HUTT denied the inference of the hon. Member, that a free-trader was necessarily in favour of an abolition of the navigation laws; and instanced the case of the hon. Member for South Shields as one in point.

Lord G. BENTINCK was sure his noble Friend at the head of the Government only wished for a fair and honest Committee on the navigation laws; but it was the fact that eleven out of the fifteen names selected by the hon. Member had voted for the Motion for inquiry into those laws; and it was also the fact, that the shipping interest, from one end of England to the other, looked upon every hon. Member who had voted in favour of that Motion as hostile to their interests. He could assure his hon. Friend and the House, that, whatever those hon. Members connected with the shipping in that House might say, it was certainly the general feeling of that interest that those hon. Members who voted for inquiry on that occasion, were not to be fully trusted in respect to it. He hoped, therefore, that a more fair division of names would be made than the present of four to eleven.

Lord J. RUSSELL said, that what his noble Friend had stated explained the opposition that was offered to the Motion. He, however, differed from his noble Friend; for he did not consider that those hon. Members who voted for inquiry should be looked upon as partisans. Looking at the list of the Committee, he thought that there were four who would uphold the navigation laws or whatever else might be adverse to the wishes of the Committee; while, of the rest, he would say four had made up their minds to have the navigation laws repealed. Of the remaining seven, he found it difficult to say what was the course which they would take on the occasion.

Mr. FERRAND considered, when the

noble Lord said that four of the Committee would vote for the abolition of the navigation laws, there was, to say the least of it, packing in that Committee. He had another reason for complaining of the selection made in the appointments of these Select Committees. The right hon. Gentleman the Secretary of State for the Home Department, in appointing the Select Committee on the law of settlement, nominated a majority of Members who act on "the same" side of the House as those Gentlemen did who usually opposed the Government. Now, he wanted to come to some understanding as to what "side" of the House hon. Gentlemen sat who usually opposed the Government. It was quite time to come to some understanding as to the position of parties in the House. There was a small section of Members who usually sat near the Members of the Government, but who gave them as it were a sham support. Now, he begged of that small section or party of Gentlemen to act with common honesty; nay, he would go further, and say common decency, and assume their proper places, and allow Committees to be fairly appointed, and not in majorities one way or another.

Mr. RICARDO only wished to have a fair Committee; and he protested against the assertion of the noble Member for Lynn (Lord G. Bentinck), that the majority of the Members named were opposed to the shipping interests of the country. If the noble Lord, or any other hon. Member, opposed the Committee as they were named, he would stand by his proposition. There were eight Members selected from one side of the House, and seven from the other. [*Laughter.*] He did not exactly understand what the laugh he had just heard meant, because he did not acknowledge Gentlemen who had seated themselves on a certain bench this Session, to take the direction of matters. He had endeavoured to name the Committee as fairly as possible.

Lord J. MANNERS said, that the hon. Member who had last spoken, must have greatly misunderstood his noble Friend the Member for Lynn, if he thought that the noble Lord asserted that the majority of the Members of the Committee were opposed to the navigation laws. His noble Friend had only stated that the shipping interests of the country were of that opinion. He did not rise for the purpose of prolonging the discussion of this subject. On the contrary, he was anxious to put an end to it as soon as possible, and he would suggest that the four Members named to serve on the Committee, whose opinions seemed to be known as favourable to the maintenance of the navigation laws, should, in order to ensure delightful harmony on the subject, decline to answer when their names were called. The hon. Member for Stoke-upon-Trent and the Government would then have the matter all their own way.

The CHANCELLOR of the EXCHEQUER thought it desirable that there should be as fair a Committee on the subject as possible; and as there seemed to be some difference of opinion with respect to the constitution of it by the Members already nominated, he proposed that the question should be postponed till Monday.

Motion withdrawn.

House adjourned at half-past Twelve o'clock.

HOUSE OF LORDS,

Monday, February 15, 1847.

Minutes.] Public Bills.—1^{a} Distilling from Sugar. 2^{a} Destitute Persons (Ireland).

Petitions Presented. From Blandford Forum, for the Repeal of the Poor Removal Act.—From the Temperance Society of Hexham, for the Adoption of Measures for Stopping the Manufacture of Intoxicating Liquors.—From Mountmellich, praying that the Assessments for the Relief of the Poor may be charged on the Unions generally.—From Thomas Callam, for Assimilating the Poor Law of Ireland with that of England.

THE CURRENCY.

Lord ASHBURTON rose to move for certain returns as to the amount of capital employed in railways, and as to the drain of bullion from the Bank of England. His Lordship, who was very imperfectly heard, was understood to say, that observing there was a large mass of Railway Bills before Parliament, he wished to ascertain how far the operations arising out of these schemes might, among other effects, have a tendency to deprive the legitimate commerce of the country of those resources which it would otherwise enjoy, and how far they might tend to embarrass the finances of the Government. Something like a new circulating medium, in the shape of bonds and debentures, interfering very much with Exchequer-bills, had arisen out of these schemes. There had also been a considerable drain of bullion from the Bank of England for some weeks or a few months past. He did not wish to intimate that there was anything in that circumstance calculated to create alarm in the country, or that it had arisen from any cause besides the natural course of things; though it might undoubtedly have been extensively promoted by the condition and circumstances of the circulation of the country. There was also an apprehension that, in some shape or other, Government would borrow a considerable sum of money (and indeed millions seemed to be talked about with great levity), and this, combined with the facts of the drain of gold, and of Exchequer-bills being on the verge of par, made it very important that all the information that could be given as to the general financial condition of the country should be furnished as soon as possible. It was the more important that their Lordships should have this information before them, as in addition to the railway schemes which had already absorbed a large part of the capital of the country, there were, he understood, new proposals which would require many millions more. The information he asked for was necessary, in order to enable their Lordships to form a judgment as to the propriety of giving their sanction by Acts of Parliament to the raising of the sums now proposed to be expended for new railway speculations. He wished to know what amount of railway debentures was in circulation; what capital had been paid by instalments; how much had been borrowed, and for what period, and at what rate. Their Lordships might then form an opinion as to how far this mass, thrown into the circulation, had a tendency to raise unfairly the interest of money, and pinch the business of the country. In addition, he wanted to know—if the Railway Commissioners could furnish him with the information—the general extent to which the Railway Bills in the present year were likely to go. He was also anxious to ascertain how far the directors of the Bank of England, neglecting Exchequer-bills, had become investers of capital in these railway debentures, and what amount of bullion there was in the Bank, so that their Lordships might have before them the whole system of the circulation of the country in its present strange and anomalous condition. No doubt, many of these railway speculations might be well founded; but yet the assent of Parliament might be asked for in respect to them to a much greater extent than it would be prudent at once to grant. In France, where there existed so much distress from the same cause as here, the Legislature had thought it prudent to suspend temporarily new railway projects, in order that they might be better digested and considered. It could not be less desirable that the British Parliament should maturely consider similar projects in this country, and confine its legislation in the present year to those works only which were absolutely necessary, such as the filling up of gaps between existing lines of communications, &c., not, however, at least for England, sanctioning the introduction of any new line. This would have the effect of leaving capital more free for outlay in Ireland. The noble Lord concluded by moving for returns on the several points adverted to by him, in reference to railways and the Bank of England.

The Earl of CLARENDON regretted that the noble Lord had departed from the regular and useful practice of giving notice before bringing forward such a Motion. The noble Lord had moved for returns of an important and comprehensive nature, and had accompanied that Motion by a comprehensive, important, and, in some respects, alarming speech. He (the Earl of Clarendon) was not prepared to deny that it would be useful to be in possession of the information moved for; but the returns appeared to affect so many interests, in respect to railways, the Bank of England, the public securities, and the financial affairs of the country, that it would be too much to expect that their Lordships would assent to the Motion without due notice. He trusted, therefore, that the noble Lord would name another day for the Motion.

Lord MONTEAGLE thought, that with respect to some of the information moved for, there would be no difficulty in furnishing it, and the possession of it by their Lordships would be of practical importance. With respect to the returns required from the Bank of England, he suggested that, except in a case of stringent necessity, it would not be expedient to ask from the Bank of England more than that which it was required to furnish when Parliament entered into a new compact with that establishment. He concurred with the noble Lord in thinking that it behoved Parliament to consider whether it was not their duty to stay their hands, under existing circumstances, with respect to railway legislation in this country.

Lord BROUGHAM had all along been in favour of due deliberation with respect to railway legislation; but it was now nearly all over, and just as the steed was gone, they began to think of shutting the stable-door; for he perceived that a Bill, in reference to future railway legislation, had been introduced into the other House; but it was only to take effect from and after the commencement of next Session, when probably all the railway business would be over.

LORD ASHBURTON withdrew his Motion, and postponed it till Thursday. It had been suggested, that the Bank of England might object to afford the information he required; but he thought not, because the Bank of England did not object to supply any information which was now asked for by Parliament. The noble Earl (the Earl of Clarendon) had charged him with making an alarming speech. He certainly felt no alarm with respect to the state of the country, his only wish being that the Parliament should be in possession of the information he called for.

The EARL of RADNOR cautioned the House against resuming the old practice of interfering with the management of the Bank—a course which, he believed, would be attended with very pernicious results.

Subject dropped.

IMMIGRATION OF IRISH PAUPERS.

EARL FITZWILLIAM moved the printing of certain returns from Liverpool, relating to the number of Irish paupers arriving in that port. It appeared, that on the 7th of February, no less than 2,585 individuals of that class were landed; and the total number poured in between the 13th of January and the 11th of February, was 27,012. On the 25th of January, 25,529 had been relieved by the parochial authorities; on the 26th, 25,525; on the 27th, 23,313; on the 28th, 24,000; and on the 29th, 24,100. He was bound to state, that during the last twelve days the number elieved, had considerably diminished.

LORD BROUGHAM remarked, that the average influx continued to be the same, viz., about 900 a day.

The MARQUESS of WESTMEATH thought that it would be desirable to ascertain what proportion of the individuals in question had arrived in Liverpool for the purpose of emigration; and what proportion with a view to the reception of parochial relief there.

EARL FITZWILLIAM argued, that it was advisable to act upon the suggestion of his noble Friend. During the last week there had been a very considerable diminution in the number of paupers relieved; but whether this circumstance was attributable to emigration, or to the paupers having spread themselves over portions of this country, he was unable to say; and it might be difficult to gain accurate information on the subject even in Liverpool. He had no doubt, however, that they would be able to ascertain the number of emigrants; and he thought it very desirable that their Lordships should have this information before them.

LORD STANLEY was afraid it would be found that the number of emigrants was extremely small; for very few persons came to Liverpool from Ireland with a view to emigration before the end of March, or beginning of April. He feared it would be found that a very small number of those persons had come to Liverpool with any other object than that of obtaining relief.

The DUKE of WELLINGTON observed, that there was a great deal of information in the body of the papers referred to by the noble Earl (Earl Fitzwilliam) which it would be well to have laid upon their Lordships' Table, before any discussion took place on this subject.

EARL GREY said, he was informed, a few days ago, that emigration from this country to America, did not appear to have ceased at all during the last twelve months; and he understood that, since the commencement of the present year, between 6,000 and 7,000 emigrants had left Liverpool for the United States. But the information he had received was to the effect, that, by far the majority of those persons who had landed in Liverpool from Ireland had come to this country in order to obtain relief, and were not of the class of persons who were likely to emigrate. He was led to believe, from what he had heard on the subject, that emigration during the present year would be carried on upon a very large scale.

A NOBLE LORD suggested that it would be desirable to have returns from other ports as well as Liverpool. He should like to know the number which had been landed lately at Newport, in Wales.

EARL GREY feared that there would be no means of procuring such a return.

Returns ordered to be printed.

DESTITUTE PERSONS (IRELAND) BILL.

On the Motion of the MARQUESS of LANSDOWNE, the Order of the Day for the second reading of the Destitute Persons (Ireland) Bill was read. The noble Marquess, in moving the second reading of the Bill, said, that their Lordships were aware that this was the first of a series of measures which would be submitted for their consideration, connected with the great exigency which had arisen out of the state of Ireland. It would be unnecessary for him to detain their Lordships at any length; for as he had already explained on a former occasion the general principles upon which this measure was founded, it would be sufficient if he now stated the details arising out of the Bill, which were neither numerous nor complicated. The first thing he was desirous of stating was, that this Bill was limited in its character, and temporary in its duration. It was a Bill which, if it were made a permanent measure, would undoubtedly be liable to very great abuse; and which in his opinion could only be justified by the present state of Ireland, and by those circumstances which might be expected to arise in the course of the next six months in that country. The circumstances to which he alluded, he need scarcely say, were the probable insufficiency of the demand for labour during the next six months, and the extraordinary difficulty of obtaining subsistence for the people during that time. It having been, as he believed, the general feeling of their Lordships, that it would be convenient and desirable, as far as might be practicable, to suspend the continuation of presentments for public works in Ireland —liable as those presentments had been found to very considerable abuse, and intended, as they originally were, to last only for a limited period—the necessary result of that suspension would be, that for some months of the time before those measures came into operation, which he trusted would provide a greater amount of labour, and a more regular demand for labour, in that country than had been hitherto afforded, a very large and pressing amount of destitution would be found to exist in various places, for which it was the duty of Parliament, as far as legislation could do so, to provide a remedy. By the Bill which he now held in his hand, the Lord Lieutenant was enabled to appoint a relief commission, or rather a relief committee, for the purpose of giving general directions for the relief of the misery and distress which at this time prevailed to a most alarming degree in many parts of Ireland. He was sure, when their Lordships looked at the constitution of that committee, and when they knew it was to include Sir J. Burgoyne, whose experience, skill, assiduity, and judgment, had been displayed in the conduct of most important affairs, they would admit that it was as well adapted to discharge the important functions connected with the administration of relief in Ireland, as any committee that could possibly be formed. This commission having been appointed, it was proposed that relief committees should be appointed in different parts of Ireland, under the authority of the Lord Lieutenant, and that these committees should provide, where it was necessary, for the relief of the destitute poor. The guardians of the poor were in all cases to be members of the relief committees; but to them were to be added, by the Lord Lieutenant, the names of other persons, including the names of the magistrates resident in each electoral division; and to these persons was to be committed the power of administering the provisions of this Bill. The Treasury was to be authorized to make advances to relief committees, and to grant loans for the purpose of administering relief; and, in order to provide funds for the purchase of food, rates were to be levied, and loans might be advanced upon those rates. The Treasury were to be authorized to make advances of sums in aid of rates and subscriptions; but they were not to be confined strictly to any exact proportion. Although it was intended that the sums granted by the Treasury should generally bear the proportion of one half to the amounts contributed in the several districts, it was provided by this measure that the Lords of the Treasury should have the power, in wealthy districts, where it was reasonable to suppose that large subscriptions and rates would be obtained, to give such a sum in aid as they might deem necessary, and which would be less than would be afforded in the case of poor and destitute districts; and, on the other hand, that in those parts of Ireland where unhappily poverty and destitution had extended to the middle classes, their Lordships should have the power to grant, in aid of the rates, larger loans than they would do in districts which were more favourably circumstanced. These were nearly all the propositions contained in the present Bill; and he must state to their Lordships, that the measure was introduced solely for the purpose of meeting what was supposed to be a temporary exigency, and that its provisions were not intended to be drawn into a precedent. The measure stood upon its own merits; and he could not doubt that its provisions would be brought into exercise, in many cases, with most beneficial results. It would have been more satisfactory to him (the Marquess of Lansdowne), had he been able, concurrently with this Bill, to present for their Lordships' consideration a measure, the effect of which would be to stimulate improvement, and to increase the amount of labour, by the advances which it was proposed to make for the encouragement of that new class of improvements which could alone create an effectual demand for labour, and provide sources of employment at this crisis. Their Lordships were, however, aware, that delays had occurred which had prevented other Bills from being sent up to that House; but, regarding this measure as one of pressing importance, he had not thought it right to postpone bringing it under their Lordships' consideration, and he trusted they would see the expediency of passing it without delay.

LORD BROUGHAM did not anticipate that anything like party feeling was likely to prevail with regard to this question on either side of the House; and he must say that among the extremely painful and lamentable facts of which every post brought information from the sister kingdom, from Scotland, and even from some parts of England, the fact upon which the eye reposed with the least discomfort, and indeed with comparative satisfaction, was the good feeling so generally prevailing; the absence of all party or personal feelings; and the general calmness, deliberation, and candour with which the measures submitted to their consideration had been considered by the Members of both branches of the Legislature. This state of feeling was worthy of men placed in such a crisis, and honourable to the Members of either House. He (Lord Brougham) must, however, say a word as to the time at which they were now called upon to consider this question. He felt bound to state his opinion, which he had shadowed out at the beginning of the Session, that Parliament ought to have assembled earlier in the year. If there had been nothing that Parliament could do—if the matter had been one which was to be left to the private operation of individual interests and feelings, the interests of the sufferers, and the charitable feelings of those who could relieve them—if only the Government were to act—and if there was to be no legislation at all on the subject—he could perfectly well conceive that there would not only have been no use in assembling the Parliament, but that such a step would have been inexpedient. But in the actual circumstances of the case, he would ask, why was Parliament not called together in November? As the remedy was to be legislation, why not assemble the Legislature? The same necessity which now existed, existed equally in the month of October; to a certain degree, it had existed even in the month of August. They were now in the middle of February; five or six weeks must elapse before the Government measures could be got through, and this deplorable necessity for interference existed just as much in the middle of November. He contended that they ought, therefore, to have been there in the month of November. He knew it had been said that it was better not to bring over the Irish Members at that time. But so it was better not to bring them over now. If it were not good for Ireland to bring over the Irish Members in November, neither could it be desirable that they should come over in the middle of February. Parliament might have met; there was no necessity for a call of the House; and the desirableness of the Irish Members remaining in Ireland, might have been a very good argument against a call of the House. There were some things he could not help thinking that the Irish landlords could have done just as well by their agents, and among them were the 6,400 processes that had been lately served in one part of Ireland, 4,000 of which were for non-payment of rent. This was not the principle upon which a noble Friend of his had acted; his noble Friend had not thought it necessary to serve his tenants with notices to quit in the midst of one of the most severe winters that had ever been known, and by this means to add to the afflictions of the people; in the midst of the pestilence, too, which followed, as it generally did, in the train of famine. His noble Friend, who was in the receipt of property in Ireland to the amount of 9,000*l.* a year, as well managed as any in Ireland, had from 4,000 to 5,000 tenants, and the average rent of each tenant was not more than 45*s.* per acre, while many of them paid no more than 4*s.* or 5*s.* None of these 4,000 tenants had his noble Friend found it necessary to eject for the 5*s.* of rent unpaid, when the persons were in a state of dreadful and hopeless destitution; while other proprietors, in the exercise of an unquestioned and unquestionable, and undenied and undeniable right to appeal to the law if a 5*s.* rent was not paid, had thought fit, having regard to the state of the country, and the famine, and the fact that the 5*s.* rent could not be paid, because the tenant was in a state of absolute and hopeless destitution—these proprietors, he said, had thought it fitting and expedient, and also humane and charitable, perhaps, to turn out these wretched creatures, when there was no food in the country, and no money to buy it. He had ascertained that 702 of those paupers who now crowded the port of Liverpool, had been driven by process of ejectment from the district to which he had alluded. Perhaps some persons might be of opinion that there would be no harm in bringing over such proprietors, while there was a chance of the Bills Parliament might pass doing some good. He wished to record anew his objection to any measures of relief that proceeded on the assumption of the doctrine, that it was part of the duty of any Government whatever to feed the people of any country, or to provide food, wages, or labour for the people. The duty of the Government was to secure the rights of the people and the rights of property; never to interfere with either one right or the other; and to smooth away every obstacle, and remove every impediment, which either bad laws, the violence or the wickedness of men or of courts, might interpose in the way of every man dealing with his property as he listed, and disposing of his labour where and how he might think proper. It was never the duty of a Government to interfere, except in extraordinary and almost unparalleled circumstances; and the proof of that extraordinary necessity lay upon those who recommended interference. The proof of the excepted cases existing lay on those who departed from the rule, who would have to show that they might safely apply the funds of the people to the relief of such a necessity, and that they had the right to give the relief; because they had no right to give relief to one at the expense of another part of the community. It was easy to say, let us vote millions to relieve the distress in Ireland, or to attempt to relieve the distress; but there must first be shown such a pressure of overruling and overwhelming necessity as forced the Government to interfere, whether they would or not. He did not mean to blame the Government. Very probably if he were himself in their position he should be unable to resist the cries of distress that were ringing in their ear; but there were positions, both civil and military, in which it was more difficult to stand still than to move, even when one knew if he did move, he did so at his highest peril. There were cases when it was more difficult to do nothing than not to do something, although the trying to do something were almost certain mischief. His next position was that the Government must take most especial care, even now, that in this overwhelming weight, this cruel and harsh pressure, this almost unbearable pressure, what they were about to do should not make the thing worse—that they did not do harm instead of good—and that would depend upon the character of the mischief and the nature of the measures intended to remedy it. He hoped he should not be reckoned too speculative if he said that it appeared to him hardly possible to frame or devise a measure the tendency of which was not to create more harm than it relieved, or professed to relieve, in dealing with the existing distress. The expenditure of the Government money had already done some evil. No one doubted that under the Labour-rate Act some good had been done; but it was certain that also there had been a great deal of bad management, and great abuses, when the very money raised from the people had been employed in spoiling the roads, in making good roads perfectly impassable. Parliament having made one step into the ditch in the month of August last, that was enough to make them pause—to require all the light that was necessary—lest they should do what might produce the same bad consequences, and worse. That was the moral he drew from the failure of the measures proposed at the end of last Session. They were all agreed that a great amount of evil had been done; and one part of the plan now proposed was to wean the workmen from bad and unprofitable works. They found they had got into a lock, and now Parliament would willingly draw back; but they could not. A great number of roads had been reduced to so terrible a state by the improvements that had taken place in them, that it was necessary to throw good money after bad, with the hope of restoring the roads to their former state; there could not be a more reasonable request than that made by parties who demanded that they should have their former good roads restored to them, instead of their present bad ones being continued and extended. Would not their Lordships all say, that if they could they would recall the Bill of last August? It was a lamentable thing to think that 500,000 persons commanded by a staff of 11,000 check clerks should have been employed for little purpose but to do mischief instead of good: he would much rather that there had been 11,000 men employed, and only fifty clerks to look after them. But how had these 500,000 men been employed?

The MARQUESS of LANSDOWNE said, the destroying of the roads was the exception. The general rule was, that good roads had been made.

LORD BROUGHAM: No doubt it would be so represented. But admit that no great harm had been done in destroying the roads, yet great harm, indeed, had been done in destroying farm labour. The tendency of the Government employment was to induce labourers to leave the farm, where they earned 1*s.* 2*d.* a day, and go to the roads, where they earned only 10*d.* a day, because on the roads they did no work at all worthy of the name, and on the farm they were obliged to do a fair day's work for a fair day's wages. All these things ought to make them extremely cautious how they proceeded in the same course. Unhappily, their course was in a wrong direction, and they could not stop—matters must get daily worse. His fear was, that if Government went on as they were doing, they would habituate the people of Ireland, not to stand alone, but to run in leading-strings, and then they would be unable, without great difficulty, to withdraw the artificial guidance and support. The Irish labourer would look to other means of employment than the tilling of the ground. Now, the Government ought not to enter into the labour market to conflict with the landlord, the manufacturer, or whoever had capital and employed labour in Ireland, were he ever so small a holder. The consequence of so doing would be, that long after the famine the mischief of such a course would continue, and would scatter its baneful fruits over the land. He did not mean to give any opposition to the Bill; but he would merely request the Government to give their most careful attention to the points which he had suggested for their consideration. He had seen the letter from Sir George Grey to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, which seemed to be the best exposition that could be given of the objects of the present measure. But there were some curious inconsistencies in it. In the first place, it said that relief should be given only in food, and that the food was required to be sold at not less than the cost price; but, in the next sentence, the letter said that the food might be given away if there was an urgent necessity for it. No provision seemed to have been made for any medium course, when a man might have some money, though not enough to purchase the food at cost price; to him, therefore, although he had some money, food was to be given for nothing, in pursuance of the instructions contained in the letter. Because he could not pay all, he was not to pay what he could pay! Again, the letter proclaimed that the relations between the landlord and the tenant and labourer should be by all means restored; but the whole system it recommended went to render that restoration impossible. And the evil was so much the worse in Ireland because the Irishman had not the Englishman's determination to work, or the Scotchman's pride, which would not let him beg—so much so, that the Highlanders would lie down and die by their hill sides (and they were doing so now) quietly and contentedly, rather than incur the odium of begging. But then again the letter said, that the gratuitous distribution of food was not to be made without proper inquiry. Could anything be more vague or bootless than such an instruction to the Committee? When a man was starving, or supposed to be starving, he would be sure to be relieved without inquiry. He very much regretted to have to adopt a line of observation which might look like harshness or an indifference to the sufferings of these poor persons; but at the same time, he was bound to consider also the sufferings of England and the state of England, and the effect of these measures on the condition of England as a nation. Nor could he shut his eyes to the probability that, even although the evil might be overcome this year, there might be worse years to look forward to, and that the convulsion we should have operated in the labour market in Ireland, would produce the most dire consequences—consequences which would not cease with the ceasing of the cause of our exertions. Enough had not been done by those who were on the spot, and were more immediately interested; yet there were admirable exceptions. For instance, in one district in Ireland, people belonging themselves to the poorer classes, and who were themselves the objects of pity and commiseration, had given their money and their labour, to them their chief property. In that district, 170*l.* had been collected for the relief of the poor, and 130*l.* of this sum had been contributed by the small farmers, the priests, and the policemen of the district. What, then, had the landlords done in the same district? They had subscribed 40*l.* But there were honourable exceptions. The conduct of two ladies, whom he should name (the Misses Gascoyne), was deserving of the highest praise. These ladies, who were surrounded with the comforts bestowed by wealth, went over to their Irish estates for the sole purpose of relieving the distress which prevailed there, and had since been constantly engaged in distributing charity and assistance to those in their neighbourhood who were suffering from privations. He highly approved of such conduct. They wrote, however, most dreadful accounts of the manner in which the Government money was abused, being much squandered on those who had not the least claim to it. He greatly honoured these charitable women. Did any one suppose that he had ever made any observation with a view to oppose the application of private funds to the purposes of charity? There were many who had property in Ireland, and who had acted in the most generous manner in affording relief; and amongst them he could not avoid on that occasion alluding to Lady Carbery, who, although in the possession of large estates and a large income, had reduced her expenditure almost to the necessaries of life, in order to afford relief. The relief afforded by these humane persons to whom he had alluded, was given under the inspection of those who afforded the funds; and the result of such inspection of the distribution of relief was to show that a large portion of the Government relief was in some cases given to those who ought not to have it, whilst the poor and those really requiring such relief were deprived of it. He wished to avoid all irritating topics in reference to a subject like that which was before them; but such absurdities had been uttered on the other side of the Channel, attributing the present distress to the Union, that he could not help reading a letter descriptive of the state of Ireland long before the Act of Union passed—before the destruction of that most virtuous, pure, and patriotic body—that most patriotic of all assemblies ever known since the days of Sparta, the days of Lacedæmonian purity—an assembly which, whilst it extended its blessings over its own country, did honour to the Irish name all over the world. Of course, he meant the assembly that met before 1801, "not a bow-shot from the College." But he had that in his hand which told a very different story. It was a letter (written in 1741) from Lord Chancellor Jocelyn to Lord Chancellor Hardwicke, in which he said that—

> "The people were at that time in a very melancholy way. Two hard winters had undone the lower sort, who being accustomed to softer seasons for many years had neglected to make provision for their families; that the potato, which was the food of nine in ten of the people, had failed, and the cattle were perishing for want of fodder; that in consequence fluxes and fevers ensued, and the number of prisoners was so great, that it had been necessary to send down three judges—(so that crime at least had not been invented since the Union) one of whom had died of gaol fever, and the Attorney General, who had been sent in his place, was not expected to survive."

The letter went on to say, that they were in hopes that Connaught would have escaped, but things were quite as bad there; and one of the Barons of the Cork circuit, he added—

> "Wrote that they were grievously offended daily with miserable spectacles of expiring wretches and the most noisome smells."

Now, no doubt the Union had produced that irreparable loss to Ireland—the loss of the Irish Parliament. [*Laughter.*] Yes, irreparable; for he doubted whether any law could have the moral potency to create any body nearly approaching to what the Irish Parliament was. But at the same time it was clear from this letter that such a state of things as now existed could not be attributed to the Union. It was just as clear that the present distress was not without example. A worse case existed in 1741, and yet Parliament did not interpose. The question, however, now, was the remedy. The people of England were taught to look on the people of Ireland as thrown on them for support. It was true they were told that whatever they advanced should be repaid. All the Irish gentlemen say, "Oh, of course, we mean to repay you. Only give us your money as a loan—of course we mean and intend to repay you." So said they all in public. But when he had privately put the question to some of them, "But do you think you will repay?" that was a very different thing. He had never yet met one of them who seemed to have any kind of confidence that they would repay. Indeed, it was more usual with them to say, "We have all the will, but we don't think we shall be able." Some noble Lord had said, "Our repaying is out of the question, but we intend it." When we in England wanted money, however, we could not go into the money market, and get it at the current interest on such security. And those who held this language seemed to forget how their estates were mortgaged, and that yet they contrived to command all the luxuries of life, such as all men in the same rank in England could not command—they could have their servants, their carriages, and their French wines. These were some of the complaints we in England made against those who came to ask for money; and as they came to ask for money, it entitled us to make remarks which would otherwise be indelicate; and we also complained that in Ireland they did not pay the taxes we did; for instance, not the income tax, nor the assessed taxes, nor the land tax. Of this there could be no doubt, that something must be done to prevent the scenes which at the present moment were going on in the west of England. It was well known that now as many as 900 a day arrived in this country from Ireland, and they were not emigrants who were going out to the colonies; on the contrary, many of them were professional beggars, and most of them denied having any property, though a few pounds were secreted about their persons. Much had been said at different times of the exemption which Ireland enjoyed from the burden of assessed taxes. To him it appeared that it would have been much better if Ireland had been subjected to assessed taxes; for, in such a case, that part of the United Kingdom would have had all the benefit without the evils of sumptuary laws. In a discussion like the present, it was a fact not unworthy of attention, that in Ireland a larger proportion of the land was mortgaged, than in any other country whatever. Out of a rental of 14,000,000*l.*, the sums paid to mortgagees did not amount to less than from 5,000,000*l.* to 6,000,000*l.* Looking, then, at the state of the landlords, he could not help feeling for that class the greatest compassion; and he hoped that relief would be given to them by enabling tenants for life to obtain money under due precautions—under such precautions as would be fair to those in the remainder; and if loans were given to mortgagors, tenants in fee-simple, we should prevent them from obtaining money to-day to pay off mortgages, with the view to-morrow of negotiating fresh loans and creating new mortgages. It was the duty of the House to protect the remainderman against the lifeholder, and the mortgagor against a repetition of imprudence; and he hoped that duty would not be neglected. In doing a generous action, nothing was more painful, nothing more indelicate, than to reproach the object of one's bounty by saying that he had brought all the misery that he was suffering upon himself. But such an observation applied to the man, and not to the lawgiver. He stood there not in the character of one man who proposed to assist his fellow-man, but as a trustee for the public; and the public did not propose to help one, but many; therefore the rules of generosity and of delicate feeling which ought to govern individual intercourse must be put out of view in dealing with national funds to be applied to national relief. The Legislature was interposing between the labourer and his employer for the benefit of both. With these observations he should leave the Bill in the hands of their Lordships.

The EARL of LUCAN rose to inquire from the noble and learned Lord near him, upon what authority he stated the number of ejectments which took place in Mayo as upwards of 6,000?

LORD BROUGHAM replied, that the authority was an official return, quoted in the House of Commons by the Chancellor of the Exchequer.

The EARL of LUCAN said, that there were a large number of processes returned at the sessions of Ballina; but these were not ejectments from land; and his noble and learned Friend did not appear to understand that circumstance. He (the Earl of Lucan) scarcely ever met an Englishman who understood anything about Ireland; and he believed that but few Englishmen knew so little about it as the noble and learned Lord. Every one acquainted with the condition of Ireland was aware that those processes were issued at the instance of the poor middleman against persons who held ground in that very minutely divided system called conacre. The noble and learned Lord expressed the great pleasure which he felt in witnessing the unanimity of good feeling that prevailed amongst all parties on the subject of the measures for the relief of Ireland; but he (the Earl of Lucan) would say, that he never heard a speech of a more acrimonious character, both as regarded Irish landlords and everything connected with Ireland, than the speech of the noble and learned Lord. He hoped that the House did not believe that these processes were ejectments — that 4,000 ejectments had been issued; and, for his part, he did not believe one word of it.

LORD BROUGHAM said, that of the number of processes, namely, 6,300, there were 4,000 for rent due; and one might naturally think that such were ejectments, when such a fact was stated as a cause of the influx of Irish paupers into Liverpool.

The MARQUESS of WESTMEATH remarked that if the proceedings had been undertaken by landlords, they would have been by civil bill process, so that the distinction was obvious.

LORD STANLEY: My Lords, it is not my intention to offer any objection to the passing of this Bill, which is but a temporary measure, of which, regarding it in that sense, I am bound to say that it violates many of the rules of political economy and of ordinary produce. A temporary measure it is; and if it were anything but a temporary measure, brought forward to meet the pressure of extreme necessity and severe calamity, such as prevents us from entertaining any consideration but that of providing for the present necessity, and preventing a large portion of the people of Ireland from perishing by famine—if under any other circumstances a Bill such as that which now lies upon your Lordships' Table were brought forward, so far from receiving the unanimous sanction of this or the other House of Parliament, it would be very difficult to find a Member of either House who would undertake the responsibility of supporting it. I beg now to call the attention of your Lordships to some of the provisions of the Bill, not in the shape of an objection to the Bill, which, as I have before remarked, is only temporary, but merely for the purpose of showing your Lordships—especially after the speech of my noble and learned Friend behind me (Lord Brougham), who dealt in too indiscriminate a censure on the character of Irish proprietors—the condition of those proprietors, and because I wish the country to understand the position which those landlords and proprietors occupy as regards the measures proposed for the relief of the disasters in Ireland, and the taxation which is to be imposed under the provisions of this Bill. Never, I believe, on any former occasion has such unlimited, unconstitutional, and absolute power been given over local taxation, as that which is to be given by the Bill before us—power of local taxation, and absolutely unrestricted power over the public Treasury—power without stint or control in the Executive Government. In the first instance, the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland is by this Bill authorized to appoint relief committees wherever he thinks proper, and the Commissioners are to have power of appointing officers and a staff as large as may be required by the emergency, including the appointment of inspectors. The first duty to be performed in carrying this Bill into operation, is the issue of an order by the Lord Lieutenant, to the effect that in any electoral district or division in which the Lord Lieutenant shall think that such a course may be necessary, a committee should be appointed, called a relief committee, that committee to consist, with the exception of the resident justices of the district, and the elected guardians, of persons nominated at the sole will and pleasure of the Lord Lieutenant. Thus this body may be formed in such a manner as to exclude the principal landed proprietors, and to consist mainly of those appointed, as I have already observed, at the will and pleasure of the Lord Lieutenant. Let the House now look at the power that is given to these bodies, from which the landlords are excluded. They are empowered to form a list of such and so many persons as may seem to them deserving and in want of aid from any fund whatever which may happen to be placed at the disposal of the Government; and such committees possess unbounded power in authorizing the application of money for immediate relief. Upon those proceedings it has been said that there is a check—that there is a check in the Finance Committee—a check in the local authorities; but it should be remembered that if the Lord Lieutenant possesses the power of altering the amounts granted, he of course possesses the power of increasing as well as that of diminishing; and, as I before said, the Lord Lieutenant is in no manner restricted with respect to the appointment of the relief committees. He may select whomsoever he chooses—he might select men who do not possess a shilling's worth of property in the district—he may select men who by their votes and proceedings in the committee will not be responsible for one farthing of the money to be expended; and yet a proposition so extraordinary has been unanimously consented to by the Irish representatives in the other House, and by the Irish Peers, merely on consideration of the present distress: so deep is their sense of the present emergency, that they agreed at once to invest the Government with unlimited powers. It has often been said that they are thoughtless and improvident. No one, however, can deny that they have now manifested an utter disregard of selfish considerations—that in a manner the most reckless they are willing to sacrifice their own interest to provide for the wants of the poor. My Lords, I say that the manner in which they have consented to place their whole property in the hands of an irresponsible tribunal, and to support the Government without distinction of party, giving it the whole control of and power of taxing their properties for the relief of the distress, not merely on their own properties, but in the immediate neighbourhood of the districts in which they hold property, ought to convince us that this a moment of all others when the Irish landlords do not deserve to have it imputed to them that they are indifferent to the sufferings of the people, or that they are unwilling to take upon themselves the full amount of the burdens for which they ought to be responsible. There is another extraordinary power in this Bill, which affects not only the Irish landlords but the British public, namely, giving to the Executive, for the first time, I believe, a power to dispose of the public money in the relief of the distress; for although the sum to be given by way of loan is limited to 300,000*l.*, there is no limit fixed to the extent to which the Commissioners of the Treasury may advance grants in aid of contributions.

The MARQUESS of LANSDOWNE and EARL GREY interposed, observing, that the power of granting money was limited by the grants which, from time to time, Parliament might vote for that purpose.

LORD STANLEY resumed: It is true that in the 17th clause, the power given to the Treasury is to grant money according to the votes of Parliament, but no greater power could be given; so far I am in error in saying that the power of the Treasury is unlimited. This Bill I look upon to be not only of a most exceptional, but of a most exceptionable character; it violates the rules of political economy; and, to some extent agreeing in the observations of my noble and learned Friend, I may add, that it is possible it may leave behind all the old evils, notwithstanding all the good which it may do in relieving the present necessity. But all those considerations must be overlooked. Your Lordships are prepared to overlook them; and the other House has wisely made them yield before the paramount consideration that the people of Ireland must not be allowed to starve, if the responsibility of England and of Ireland can prevent it. And I say, my Lords, that that consideration, and none other, could have justified the introduction of this Bill. The powers granted by it are, with regard to the public purse, almost unlimited—with regard to the local taxation of Ireland, absolutely unlimited; and I say it is to the credit of the Irish proprietors that there has not been one word of complaint uttered by any one of them—so far, at least, as I have heard—of the extent to which their properties are likely to be incumbered by the irresponsible authority of the Executive conferred by this Bill. There is one provision of this Bill, however, which I should say is even more objectionable than any other. It is one which gives a power never before vested in any irresponsible body, not only of fixing the taxation for the relief of particular districts, but of declaring who are the persons that shall be called upon to pay. If it were said, "There shall be the power in the Lord Lieutenant to prescribe in such a manner as that every individual proprietor shall provide for all the destitute who shall be on his property, to the extent to which that property shall go," that provision, strong as it would be, would be infinitely less objectionable and less dangerous than that which gives to the Lord Lieutenant the power of saying, "A shall pay for A's poor, or B shall pay for B's poor, or A and B together shall pay for A and B's poor;" with the further power of saying, as he has, "A, B, and C being together, A, B, and C shall pay conjointly for the poor of that district in which C may not be responsible by the inhabitancy of one poor person." That is a great power for the law to exercise; but it is infinitely greater when it is placed in the hands of one person. I do not, from my knowledge of my noble Friend the present Lord Lieutenant, doubt that this power will be properly exercised: but it is an enormous power to vest in any officer. But, my Lords, objectionable in so many points as this Bill is, I had rather that the responsibility should be left altogether with Her Majesty's Government, than that your Lordships should attempt to alter or materially to amend this Bill. I would rather let it be said, "Those are the powers which the Government has asked for—those powers in a great national emergency Her Majesty's Government deem indispensable; they ask for our confidence—we give it them to the fullest and most unlimited extent." And, for my own part, whilst I do not say that many parts of the Bill might not be improved, I think that, under the peculiar circumstances of the case, and the Bill being only of temporary duration—being intended to last only for eight months to come—I do think, I say, it would be infinitely better that the Bill should pass in the form it is proposed by the Government, than that your Lordships should attempt to amend that, which in its whole essence, and in the whole of its provisions, is so exceptional, that it is difficult to say to what particulars your amendments should refer. What I principally rose for, however, was to express an urgent hope, that, in proportion to the readiness which Irish Members and Irish proprietors, and the two Houses of Parliament, have shown to meet the views of the Government in legislating for an immediate remedy for a temporary, but most formidable emergency, just in the same proportion will be the caution with which the Government will approach the subject of a more permanent provision for Ireland. The evil that may be done by improvident legislation for the next eight months, may not be inconsiderable; but the evil you will do will be far greater, if you introduce and try to press upon Ireland measures for the permanent relief of the people, which are at variance with the feelings, adverse to the opinions, and condemned by the judgment of those of the educated and intelligent classes who know most of Ireland, and on whom the burden of taxation is about to fall. Depend upon it, my Lords, nothing can be more fatal than the passing by the British Parliament of a measure of poor-law relief, condemned by the representatives of the people of Ireland. I trust that, although this question is not now before your Lordships, I may be permitted —in no spirit of hostility, but rather with the view of making suggestions on points with regard to which I think the greatest consideration will be required—to suggest three or four provisions, which, as I think, ought to be—but which, as it appears to me, are not—borne in mind in providing a permanent poor law for Ireland. My Lords, you are about, by the poor law you are seeking to introduce, for the first time to confer an absolute right of relief. [The Marquess of LANSDOWNE: No!] Pardon me, it is so, unless some alteration has been made in the first clause of the Bill. You are about to confer an absolute right to relief. [The Marquess of LANSDOWNE: No!] My noble Friend must misunderstand me. By the Bill as it at present stands, boards of guardians in the different unions of Ireland are not only "authorized and empowered," but they are "authorized and required" to make provision for all persons permanently disabled, infirm, and so forth, either within or without the workhouse, as may seem best. Now, the present law gives to boards of guardians permission to relieve, but within the workhouse only; but the Bill you are about to introduce requires the guardians to relieve either within or without the workhouse. I think, therefore, my Lords, I am not wrong when I state that with regard to the permanently disabled, aged, or infirm, you are about to confer a right to relief which they do not possess at present. For my own part, though I know how heavy a burden even in that case may be thrown upon Ireland, yet I think the provision a wise one, and one to which for a moment I should not seek to object. But you are going further, and by the present Bill you are authorizing provision to be made for the able-bodied either within, or in certain cases without, the doors of the workhouse —you are authorizing the Poor Law Commissioners to require the board of guardians in certain cases to provide for the able-bodied out of the workhouse. I am not arguing that provision now. It may be a necessary one; but it is one on which much is to be said—one that must be watched with the greatest possible caution —one that has a tendency more than any other to extend and increase indefinitely not only the pressure of the poor rate itself, but to encourage the unfortunate tendency on the part of the Irish people to prefer relief without labour, to an independent subsistence derived from labour. Now the point to which I wish to call your Lordships' attention is this. You are about to lay a very heavy burden upon the land of Ireland; you are about to require that the land of Ireland shall support the great body of its destitute poor. It is not unworthy of your Lordships, and I trust it will not be lost sight of by Her Majesty's Government, to consider whether those provisions which under the limited amount of relief now granted, may have been found wise, safe, and sufficient, with regard to the constitution of boards of guardians, may not be equally unwise and unsafe when we come to grant a much more extended aid, and impose so much heavier burdens; and I am sure your Lordships will see that whilst you are imposing upon Ireland the full amount, or nearly the full amount, of the burden which England is called upon to bear, you are bound in fairness and candour to give to Ireland the same protection against waste and abuse which has been given to England. There are two points in which the Irish poor law essentially differs from the English law with regard to the constitution of the boards of guardians. In the first place, the condition of things to start with is very different, because, unhappily, property in Ireland is divided much between the very high and the very low; and that class which in England forms the most important constituent in boards of guardians, namely, the middling and substantial farmer, is just the class in which Ireland is most deficient. Then, if the power devolves, as it does in Ireland in a great measure, on the lower and poorer classes—on a class little above the labourers themselves—it may be well for your Lordships to consider whether it is wise that there should be interposed, for the sake of prudence against waste and abuse, a less security than is offered in England by the presence of *ex-officio* guardians. And yet the law as it stands in Ireland limits the number of *ex-officio* guardians (who, from their position, must necessarily be men of some property), whilst in England the number is unlimited. Another point to be considered is, that the weight of the poor law in Ireland falls rather upon the landlord than upon the occupier. It has been said the landlord is the proper person on whom the burden should fall; and, ultimately indeed, lay it where you will, he is the person on whom it must fall. But when you are about to provide for the poor from the funds of the parish, above all it is most necessary that those who are to be most affected by the tax shall have a preponderating voice in the relief that is to be given; for if your boards of guardians consist of small farmers, those men paying not above one-third of the amount of taxation, whilst the remaining two-thirds fall upon the landlords, I am afraid in many cases there will be a greater temptation to profuse expenditure of the rates, and less inducement for the due and proper management of them, than there would be if the pressure fell more upon themselves, and that serious evils will be likely to result from it. The great object your Lordships should have in view in Ireland should be to raise a class of farmers who shall be themselves employers of labour. Inducements should be held out to the farmers to employ labour; for to say that the landlords can do it to the extent required if their land is portioned out amongst a large number of pauperised occupiers, is to say what is consistent neither with common sense nor experience. Just in proportion as you relieve the farmer from the pressure of the taxation which will be caused by throwing hands out of work, so do you hold out an inducement to him to throw hands out of work, and rather to trust to obtain labour at a cheap rate out of the poor rates. But if the pressure, in the first instance, of the rates which he has a voice in raising, fell directly on himself, that very pressure would be the most wholesome and the only safe check, in my judgment, to the improvident expenditure which a different system of poor law would induce in Ireland. Now, my Lords, whatever may be said against Irish landlords, I am sure there is more justice and good sense in England than to seek, under the pressure of a cry, or under the belief that they or their fathers may have neglected their proper duty, to impose on them burdens which under similar circumstances would not be borne in England, and to say, "You shall have no voice in assessing the rates—you, who pay them, shall have them laid on you by small farmers, nearly altogether exempt from payment of them—you shall not have the means of employing labour, and the farmer shall have no inducement to employ labour; but by the votes of those who will thereby be relieved from the burden which they impose on you, your estates may be to a great extent confiscated under the operation of this law." In England such a thing would lead to the most interminable waste; but to an infinitely greater degree would that be the case with a population who are accustomed to rely, not so much upon their own exertions, as upon any casual means for providing against the distress of the hour, utterly regardless of the future. There are two other points, my Lords, which I venture to suggest for the consideration of Her Majesty's Government. The first is one which I consider all-important, if you mean really to have any check whatever against a profligate expenditure of the rates. That which Government proposes now to do, is to make the assessments, and to throw the burden of taxation upon whole unions. Now, my Lords, I know that, on the other hand, proposals have been made to throw the burdens of taxation upon the townlands. That, however, I consider impracticable, because they are infinitely too small—some of them, I know, do not contain above forty or fifty acres; and the idea of an assessment upon such townlands is ridiculous. On the other hand, I am inclined to think that electoral divisions are rather too large; I think they are too large to give a sufficient scope to individual responsibility for the management of the property within them. But I am sure of this, that if you still further extend the liability of the proprietors, and from the electoral divisions throw the burden of outdoor relief and of general taxation upon the unions of Ireland, from that moment there is an end of all inducement on the part of the landed proprietors to take the smallest concern in the management of their own property. I speak, my Lords, as an Irish proprietor—as one to some degree interested; you must take, therefore, my statement as coming from an interested person. But when I say, I speak as an Irish proprietor, notwithstanding all the advantages attendant upon that position, yet whether I should continue so, if this provision is introduced into this Bill, is a matter on which I should hesitate to pronounce any opinion before your Lordships. There is one more point I would urge upon your Lordships' consideration; and I think it is one of sufficient importance to require, rather that it should be noticed at this early period, than that it should be discussed when we come to consider the provisions of the more permanent measure. It is the insertion of a legislative declaration which in England would appear to be uncalled for, because I believe the public sense of every board of guardians would practically call it into effect—I mean a declaration to the effect, that no man shall be deemed destitute and entitled to relief, and that no board of guardians shall have the right of conferring relief upon any person who at the time is the occupier of, or is in possession of, land—I do not say land sufficient for a garden, or half an acre of land, or specify any amount; but I say —and I am sure I shall have the concurrence of nine out of every ten men practically acquainted with Ireland, that you will ruin the country if you once sanction the union in one person of the two characters of pauper and farmer. I do not deny that there are not many of the small occupiers in Ireland who are not in as great distress as any class of the people; but, I think, if you have no restriction with regard to the law, the board of guardians will say, "Oh, poor fellow, he is worse off than any of us;" and the consequence will be, that a great portion of the funds of the parish will be given during one half of the year to persons who during the other half are cultivating their two or three acres of ground. At the same time, can it be imagined that anything can be more mischievous—that anything could tend more to prevent and to retard the improvement of Ireland, to obstruct improved cultivation, and to interfere with the value of property, than an enactment which provides that persons with two, three, four, or five acres of land, should continue to hold that land, employing no labour, but themselves deriving assistance from the rates of that parish the value of whose land they are hourly diminishing? A return has been laid upon the Table of your Lordships' House which I have not yet seen, but which states that there are 883,000 occupiers of land in Ireland, and that of that number there are no less than 400,000 and upwards who occupy less than seven acres each. Now, that state of things is of itself a permanent obstacle to the improvement of land in Ireland. God forbid that I should recommend extensive clearances, whilst such pieces of land afford the sole subsistence of the persons who hold them; but when you make a provision by law for all the destitute—when you tax the country for their relief, it seems to me only reasonable, nay, only absolutely necessary, that those men should have the option tendered them, "Will you receive relief upon condition of surrendering the land which you hold, or no relief?" If the number of those holders could thus be diminished, and if they would fall into the class of labourers, subsisting on wages, and failing that, on parochial alms, I am satisfied that would be the first and a necessary step to the improvement of Ireland and the maintenance of its people. And, unless some such rule be rigidly enforced, whilst I admit the principle that land and property ought to assist poverty and destitution, yet I say you cannot call upon property to discharge its duties, unless it has its rights; and among the rights of property is the right of the landlord to improve his own land, instead of seeing it permanently occupied by a tenantry incapable of improving the soil, or even of earning their own subsistence from it—unless, my Lords, I say, some such rights are enforced and secured to property, whatever you may do the result will be, not only immediate ruin to the landed proprietors, but the ultimate aggravation of those evils which at the present moment press so heavily upon the people of Ireland. I trust, my Lords, you will excuse me if I have upon this occasion, when the measure is not before the House, rather preferred to throw out a suggestion or two upon points which must come under consideration hereafter, than to wait till the Bill comes before us, to bring them before your Lordships in the shape of positive Amendments. I desire that the Government should take time to consider whether there is any weight in the observations I have made. I would not for a moment interfere with this temporary provision; but when you make this temporary provision—when, without the slightest hesitation, all you ask is conceded, to relieve the temporary distress—then, when a heavy additional burden is to be imposed, it is well we should look at the provisions which the Legislature has made to meet a different state of things—that we should see that the machinery which may have been safe for the one is safe for the other—that we should see that other provisions are introduced which are not called for by the present state of things, but which will be required if you are about to make so great a social revolution as is involved in the introduction of a new poor law into Ireland—and further, that we should see that the checks and prudential measures which are to be adopted for the purposes of humanity shall not be turned ultimately to the purpose, first, of the confiscation of landed property, and next, of aggravating the misery of the people of Ireland.

The EARL of MOUNTCASHEL did not object to the Bill, but observed, that all the rates would fall upon little more than 500,000 occupiers. The noble and learned Lord (Lord Brougham) had spoken of the readiness with which the Irish poor took to begging; but the fact was, that the average earning of the peasantry of Ireland did not exceed from 2*s*. to 2*s*. 6*d*. per week, and the consequence was that they were never able to provide against scarcity. The Irish were not idle when they had English wages and English food. It had been given in evidence before the Poor Law Commissioners in 1836, that the wives and children of persons receiving these miserable wages were obliged to beg, but that they did so reluctantly and with great shame.

EARL FITZWILLIAM did not rise to add anything to what had fallen from the noble Lord opposite (Lord Stanley), but merely to express his concurrence in all that that noble Lord had said. He thought all their Lordships who were desirous that the question should be properly understood, must be grateful to the noble Lord; and he now rose to express his entire acquiescence in every opinion which the noble Lord had uttered relative to that other measure which they might shortly expect from the House of Commons. He wished to give an instance by way of exemplification of the danger to which the noble Lord had referred, of vesting absolutely the power of relief in the hands of persons such as the noble Lord had described as likely, unless some alteration were made, to form the boards of guardians. When he (Earl Fitzwilliam) was in Ireland, in autumn last, he attended what was called "a relief committee." The first person who applied to be put on the public works—which was, in point of fact, neither more nor less than applying for relief—was one who was then in the occupation of thirty or forty acres of land. He must do the committee the justice to say that there was a general concurrence in regarding the man as ineligible; but the decision was not come to without a very strong and touching appeal to them from the priest, who stated what no doubt was true enough, that that man was in very great distress, in as great distress as any of the numerous applicants for relief.

LORD MONTEAGLE wished, in common with his noble Friend, to return his most unfeigned and most earnest thanks to the noble Lord (Lord Stanley) for the observations and suggestions he had offered to the House. He wished to call the attention of their Lordships, however, to one or two points in the Bill then before the House. With the numerous calls upon their time, it was quite impossible that the heads of the poor-law department, and of the constabulary, could properly attend to the provisions of this Act as was intended; and he would suggest to Her Majesty's Government that they should make the Bill effective by the introduction of some other persons who could devote the whole of their time to it. He entirely concurred in the remarks of his noble Friend opposite (Lord Stanley) as to the constitution of boards of guardians, and he would throw out a suggestion relative to the constitution of relief committees. The letter of Sir George Grey recognized the fact, that very large contributions had been made independent of the relief committees; if, therefore, the Government wished to promote subscriptions, parties who had subscribed a given sum should be allowed to become the administrators or controllers of their own alms. And this would, he believed, very greatly increase its amount. He very much doubted, if the alternative of electoral or union rating were adopted, whether it would be found advantageous. Before sitting down, he wished to say he could never give his consent to this Bill, if it were not to be a strictly temporary measure. If out-door relief was to be introduced as a principle in the law of the land, it behoved Parliament to pause, and to review its legislation—to see the effect that principle had produced in England and Scotland, and to hesitate long before venturing upon the experiment of its introduction into Ireland. His noble and learned Friend (Lord Brougham) had drawn a distinction between the people of Ireland and the people of Scotland, much to the advantage of the latter; but what had been the result the very first year of this principle being introduced into Scotland? for if the principle of out-door relief had failed in Scotland, it would fail much more certainly in Ireland. He referred to the opinions of Sir George Sinclair, a mutual Friend of the noble Lord's and himself, who had addressed the following letter to the Poor Law Commissioners in Scotland from the county of Caithness:—

> "I am extremely sorry to be so often troublesome, but I have this day been desired by a meeting of the ratepayers of this parish, at which I presided to request the board of supervision to inform us, whether in the event of our uniting with one or two adjacent parishes to form a union and erect a workhouse, it will be in the option of the local board to determine in each case whether a pauper shall be maintained here, and, in the event of his refusing to comply, to withhold public assistance from him; or whether it shall be in the power of every pauper to decline going to the workhouse, and insist upon an out-door allowance. In the latter case, it would be quite useless, we believe, to have recourse to this expedient, however otherwise desirable, in order to prevent idleness, check insolence, and avert ruin. The rate here already exceeds 800*l.* per annum, with every prospect of increase, especially as in this, and I believe every other parish, there are incendiaries at work to stir up the paupers against the payers, and lead them to imagine that none of them should take less than sixpence per day for each, being a larger amount than any of them ever earned by labour, if that sum were given to both the parents of every family, besides, extra allowance for children. In the course of a very few years, unless some plan be taken to prevent it, the greater part of the rental and means of this county will be absorbed in the maintenance of pauperism, as, besides new applications, there are very great numbers on the roll here who attend at every meeting to ask for an increase."

Now he contended that that which was dangerous in Scotland could not be safe in Ireland. He would throw no difficulty in the way of the present Bill passing; but if the Poor Law Bill were open to the objections to which his noble Friend opposite (Lord Stanley) had called attention, no power on earth ought to induce their Lordships not to give every opposition to the principle of it.

LORD BROUGHAM explained. His great apprehension of the poor law was, that giving parties a claim of right to out-door relief, destroyed the character of the people from the very foundation. A person who would be ashamed to beg, according to the common acceptation, was not at all ashamed to claim relief as a right.

LORD CAMPBELL was afraid that all over the world people would be found who would rather be idle than work; and he was convinced that the offer of gratuitous relief was universally demoralizing. He had no apprehension, however, of any Bill being presented to their Lordships which would give the able-bodied a right to out-door relief. He mentioned this to calm the fears of his noble Friend. The operation of the Bill was this—the funds out of which the electoral district was to receive assistance in the first instance were union funds; the union guardians would take care to have money in hand for purposes of this sort, to answer the warrant of the Lord Lieutenant; but there need not be more than one assessment upon the union for the year or six months. The Bill therefore was not liable to the objections which had been stated.

The MARQUESS of LANSDOWNE replied: He entirely concurred with the view taken by the noble Lord opposite (Lord Stanley); but their Lordships would remember that on introducing the Bill in the first instance, he stated in the strongest terms that, in itself, he conceived it to be most objectionable. This declaration could not be too often repeated, because he knew from experience that objectionable principles sometimes crept into legislation which afterwards became permanent, without those who made them being aware, in the first instance, of the magnitude of the evil. In the present case the objectionable principle was justifiable because it was necessary, and only because it was necessary. It was called for, for a short period, in consequence of the greatest pressure upon the whole nation; and the Government could not contemplate the rapid increase of destitution in Ireland without venturing to apply a temporary and partial, but he hoped, in some degree, an efficient remedy. Throughout the whole discussion on this subject, in that and the other House of Parliament, no one had denied the evil, and no one had suggested any other mode of diminishing a pressure which, unless relieved, would lead to the extinction of life in hundreds and thousands of instances. The Relief Act was said to have failed. Certainly there had been abuses arising from it; but he believed that if that Act had not been passed, half a million or a million of persons would, by the present time, have perished in Ireland for want of sustenance. In that event, both Houses of Parliament and Her Majesty's Government would have been responsible for not having endeavoured to procure some mitigation of the evil. The cases of abuse were exceptionable. He was in possession of letters which would show that the works executed under the Labour-rate Act had been useful and good—that many essential improvements were being made under it, leading to increased means for the employment of the people, and to permanent advantage. He therefore did not admit the unqualified condemnation which had been pronounced on that Act, though he did admit that it had been abused. With regard to the present Bill, it was felt impossible to define its limits strictly; but there were the greatest safeguards against abuses in cases where they could not be attempted by positive rules. He should not, however, have proposed it, had it not been accompanied by other measures for the purpose of stimulating a demand for labour, and for diminishing the pressure on charity. These measures must shortly be brought before their Lordships, and the noble Lord opposite had only done his duty to that House whilst he had rendered acceptable service to Her Majesty's Government, by throwing out the important suggestions he had. In many of those suggestions, he (the Marquess of Lansdowne) entirely concurred. More particularly he conceived, that any Bill for the introduction of a poor law into Ireland would require a reconsideration of the constitution of boards of guardians, and that greater security must be found for property in that institution if their Lordships expected the law to be carefully, properly, and satisfactorily administered. This consideration was left open. With regard to the division of districts with the view of rating, he repeated there was no intention of committing Parliament on this question. He would by no means discourage the efforts of proprietors, upon which depended the restoration of due and wholesome labour in Ireland, and the execution of those great national improvements which the unhappy failure of the one sole article of subsistence, and the necessity of substituting others, required, before the country could be reclaimed. Out-door relief, which it was not intended to admit as a right, would be the subversion of all property. None, therefore, would be given, except under the greatest safeguards, which safeguards would receive the most mature consideration. The noble Lord suggested that parties in the possession of land should not be entitled to relief; and he had been reminded that relief would not be given in England or Scotland under such circumstances. He repeated it was intended to administer out-door relief only under such safeguards as Parliament might require. Caution, however, was essential in carrying out this provision. The tendency of all the Government measures would be to diminish by insensible means the number of small tenants, for if any number of small tenants could be induced to place themselves in the situation of labourers, a great benefit would be secured both to the class themselves and to the country. In conclusion, he could see no difficulty in inserting in the Bill some clause to this effect; and he would give the subject his best consideration, being firmly persuaded that, in practice, relief ought not to be given to those who possessed land.

Bill read 2^a.

House adjourned at half-past Nine o'clock.

The following Protest against the Destitute Persons (Ireland) Bill was entered on the Journals:—

DISSENTIENT—

1. Because this Bill is based on the principle that it is the duty of a Government to provide food for the people, and I consider this principle false in theory, and as leading to injustice and disastrous consequences if attempted in practice. It is false in theory, as being, in the natural state of things, utterly impracticable, the Government having no store of food wherewith to supply the people, or funds for providing the same. In practice, it leads to injustice and disastrous consequences, because such funds can be obtained only by taxation; and if the taxes are levied (as they ought and profess to be) equally on all, the whole will be taxed to supply the wants of a part; the consequences of which must be, that some persons on the verge of destitution will be thus reduced to the same state as those whom they are taxed to relieve, and that those who by prudence and industry have raised themselves out of the reach of want, will be taxed for the relief of the improvident and idle.

2. Because it is dangerous for a Government to take any step which is calculated to instil into the minds of the people the belief that they need not rely on their own exertions for their well-being, and a hope that if they omit to take proper care of themselves, it will relieve their necessities, and gratuitously support them.

3. Because the Irish people are of a temperament peculiarly likely to be so misled.

4. Because experience, both in Ireland and in England, under the old administration of the poor law, proves that the attempt to provide gratuitously for the needy, is in its result dangerous to property and to the independence and well-being of the people, and injurious to none more than to those very persons whose benefit is thereby sought, by superseding the necessity, and thus repressing the energy, of their own exertions to help themselves—by diverting them from those resources which the pressure of want would disclose—and, above all, by teaching them to rely on external aid; which, as it cannot be efficient in extent, or permanent in duration, will finally leave them disappointed and discontented, and more destitute and helpless than before.

5. Because I fear, if this measure be adopted, it will necessarily lead to other measures of a similar nature, and that though some present relief may be given to existing misery and destitution, it will lead hereafter to an alarming increase of the evils thus temporarily mitigated, and that therefore, though feelings of the most praiseworthy and benevolent character prompt its adoption, prudence, reason, and true wisdom would reject it.

6. Because charity is a proper motive for the private conduct of individuals, but justice the paramount duty of a Government; and because charity to some on the part of the latter, works out present injustice to others, and ultimately evil to all. RADNOR.

HOUSE OF COMMONS,

Monday, February 15, 1847.

MINUTES.] PETITIONS PRESENTED. By Sir A. L. Hay, from Aberdeen, against the Use of Grain in Breweries and Distilleries.—By Mr. Craig, from Edinburgh, for Reduction of the Duty on Tea.—By Mr. S. O'Brien, from Rochdale, in Favour of the Ten Hours Factory Bill.—By Colonel Rawdon, from Armagh, in Favour of the Railways (Ireland) Bill.

CASTLEBAR UNION.

VISCOUNT DUNCAN rose to put a question to the Secretary for the Home Department relative to the Castlebar union. The newspapers of that morning stated that the Lord Lieutenant and twelve other magistrates of Mayo had been dismissed by the Government from their offices of guardians of the Castlebar union. He wished to know whether that statement was correct? He further desired to know what steps had been taken to supply the vacancies caused by the dismissal of the guardians; whether any instructions had been issued with respect to the collection of 1,079*l.*, the amount of poor-rate said to be due in the union; or with respect to levying a fresh rate?

SIR G. GREY stated, that the board of guardians of the Castlebar union had been dissolved, not by the Government, but by the Poor Law Commissioners, under the power vested in them by the Irish Poor Law Act. The Poor Law Commissioners had likewise taken the step prescribed by law in consequence of that dissolution—they had directed that other guardians should be elected. The election of the guardians would take place in the usual manner, provided for by the Act of Parliament. As the new board of guardians had not yet had an opportunity of discharging their duty, the Poor Law Commissioners would not, of course, be warranted in proceeding to do what they were resolved to do in the event of a second failure in the execution of their duty by the Castlebar board of guardians, namely, to appoint paid guardians. If the noble Lord had given notice of his intention to put the question, he (Sir G. Grey) would have brought down to the House the letter on the subject which he had received from the Poor Law Commissioners; but that document would be printed with other papers, and would be in possession of hon. Members in the course of a few days.

MR. P. SCROPE wished to know whether, in consequence of what had occurred in the Castlebar union, the Government had it in contemplation to institute a prosecution of the guardians, who, during the last three months, had been suspending relief to able-bodied paupers, and shutting the workhouse door in their faces, in consequence of which a large number of persons had died from starvation within the limits of the union, as was recorded by coroners' inquests in upwards of 100 cases. He wished to know whether the Government intended to prosecute those guardians for their heinous neglect of duty?

SIR G. GREY said, that he was not in possession of any information which authorized him to state that such a prosecution as that to which the hon. Member had alluded had been instituted, or was contemplated. When the papers should be laid upon the Table, the hon. Member would know all the circumstances of the case.

MR. P. SCROPE wished to know whether the right hon. Gentleman thought that the Government had it in their power to institute a prosecution against the dismissed guardians? Were the guardians legally responsible for their conduct?

SIR G. GREY said, that he could not answer the question.

MR. F. FRENCH condemned the practice of making attacks upon individuals under cover of questions proposed to a Minister of the Crown. If the hon. Member had any charge to prefer against the late board of guardians, let him bring it forward in the shape of a Motion, which would afford their friends an opportunity of defending them.

MR. P. SCROPE said, that he had not the slightest intention of bringing any charge against the Castlebar guardians. He merely wished to know whether the right to out-door relief existed in Ireland; because, if it did not, he would endeavour to persuade the Government and the House to establish it by the Bill which he had given notice of his intention to introduce.

THE WELLINGTON STATUE.

MR. C. BERKELEY: I rise to ask the noble Lord at the head of the Woods and Forests, whether any application has been made to him by the committee of the Wellington Statue to remove the scaffolding now remaining round the arch at Hyde Park corner; if so, at whose expense such removal is to take place; and whether any stipulation has been made with the committee for the re-erection of the scaffolding, and the ultimate removal of the statue?

VISCOUNT MORPETH: In answer to the hon. Member, I beg to state that I have received an intimation from the sub-committee of the Wellington Statue, that they have given directions to the sculptor to remove the remaining portion of the scaffolding which obstructs the view from Piccadilly on the north side. The sub-committee express an opinion that a sufficiently fair view of the statue cannot be obtained at present to enable the Government and the public to form a correct judgment as to the merits of the position of the statue. We certainly thought that a sufficiently fair view of the statue had already been obtained; but that is a question which we must leave to the decision of the sub-committee and the sculptor. The sub-committee stated, at the same time, that if, upon the removal of the remaining portion of the scaffolding, the opinion of the Government should still continue adverse to the statue continuing on its present site, they will, of course, hold themselves bound to defray the expense of the removal of the scaffolding. I think it unwise to incur fresh expense in connexion with the subject; but, as the sub-committee undertake the removal of the scaffolding on their own account, I do not feel called upon to object to it. It is the opinion of the Government that, upon the whole, the best site for the statue is the north side of Waterloo-place, where the light will be most advantageous to it.

MR. MACKINNON: Is the noble Lord aware that, amongst the ancients, it was held to be a great indignity to an individual, either during his life or after his death, to remove any statue or trophy erected to his honour? Is the noble Lord also aware of another circumstance? I am about to put a question, though I ought to apologize for proposing it to so distinguished a classic. Is the noble Lord aware that, at Pompeii, an equestrian statue was erected over an arch in the same attitude as that of the Duke of Wellington? I have a print of the statue, and will let the noble Lord see it.

VISCOUNT MORPETH: Whatever may have been the opinion of antiquity on the subject, it cannot, in modern times, be thought an indignity to any person to remove his statue from a place which is reckoned positively disadvantageous to its effect. With respect to what the hon. Member has said of Pompeii, I may observe, that art is not supposed to have been in its most palmy state when most structures in that city were raised, and that they were also liable to more violent modes of displacement than works of the present age.

EXPENSES INCURRED IN IRELAND.

LORD G. BENTINCK said, that, in conformity with notice which he had given to the Chancellor of the Exchequer, he called upon the right hon. Gentleman to furnish him with information upon the following points:—1. The average weekly amount (travelling expenses included) paid to each officer of 'the Irish Public Works Staff of 11,587,' that is to say, engineers, sub-engineers, inspectors, sub-inspectors, stewards, pay-clerks, and overseers. 2. The highest and lowest weekly pay of the same. 3. The gross amount of the cost of maintaining, during the month of January last, the aforesaid 'staff of 11,587,' together with an account of the extraordinary expenses of the Board of Works, or any other board connected with the relief of the destitute poor in Ireland. 4. The average amount of weekly wages paid to each person of the destitute poor employed upon the public works in Ireland in the month of January last. 5. The gross amount of the cost during the three months of November, December, and January last, of maintaining the absolutely destitute poor employed on the public works in Ireland, as distinguished from the staff of 11,587 officers, as aforesaid. 6. Measured in quarters or barrels, the entire amount of grain, flour, or meal, which has been provided and dealt out to the starving or destitute poor of Ireland by the present Government, since their advent to office, and the aggregate cost thereof. Finally, the ratio which the entire cost of maintaining the aforesaid staff of 11,587, added to that of the extraordinary expenses of the Board of Works, or any other board, occasioned by the relief of the destitute poor in Ireland, bears to the corresponding cost of maintaining the absolutely destitute poor themselves during the three months of November, December, and January last, in Ireland.

The CHANCELLOR OF THE EXCHEQUER said, that as his noble Friend had been kind enough to give him notice of his intention to ask for the information which he required, he would endeavour to give him all the information in his power; but his noble Friend's inquiries went so much into detail, that he could not fully satisfy him without communicating with Ireland. In the first place, his noble Friend wished to know what was the amount paid to each officer of the Irish Public Works Staff of 11,587. He had no doubt that that was the number of the staff at the present moment, because it had been increased since it was first established; but, as he was not in possession of an official return of the number of the staff at the present moment, it would perhaps be sufficient if he referred to the number stated in the blue book, page 486. It was there stated, that the number of persons employed on public works in Ireland, other than the destitute poor, was 10,897, and that the sum paid them in wages was 2,774*l.* 2*s.* 3*d.*, which, multiplied by six, would give their weekly wages. The noble Lord wished to know, in the second place, the highest and lowest weekly pay of the persons employed. By referring to the blue book, page 19, the noble Lord would find a list of a number of officers of various descriptions; and it appeared that officers in the Royal Engineers received the highest rate of pay, namely, 30*s.* per day, with travelling expenses, and 10*s.* per day hotel expenses, when out. The lowest wages were paid to overseers of works, namely, 2*s.* per day. The third of the noble Lord's inquiries referred to the cost of maintaining the staff of officers during January, and the extraordinary expenses of the Board of Works. The cost of the staff for four weeks, at the rate already stated, was 78,000*l.*, of which 20,800*l.* was paid by the public, the remainder being charged to the works. It was not in his power at present to state what the extraordinary expenses of the Board of Works amounted to. With respect to the average amount of wages paid to the destitute employed on public works in January last, he had to inform the noble Lord that, speaking generally, the lowest wages were 8*d.*, and the highest 1*s.* 4*d.* per day. The noble Lord next desired to know what was the gross cost, during November, December, and January, of maintaining the absolutely destitute poor employed on the public works, as distinguished from the staff of officers. By referring to the blue book, page 344, it would appear that the sum actually paid for labour, in four weeks of November, was 308,351*l.*; in the first four weeks of December, 585,045*l.*; and in the whole of December, up to January 2,742,050*l.* With respect to the quantity of corn purchased by the Government, it amounted to 218,000 quarters, of various sorts, up to the middle of January. More had been bought since then, but he was not in possession of a return of the amount. He was likewise unable to state what quantity of provisions had been dealt out from the depôts. For the ratio which the cost of maintaining the staff, added to the extraordinary expenses of the Board of Works, bore to the cost of maintaining the absolutely destitute, he must once more refer to the blue book, page 487, where it was stated that the cost of the staff was not more than 7 per cent on the expenditure for labour. He had already said, that he could not state what the extraordinary expenses of the Board of Works were.

IRISH CLERGY.

MR. SHAW gave notice that in the Committee on the Poor Law (Ireland) Bill, he would move that the payers of tithe rent-charge in Ireland should be put on the rate, and rated to the poor law according to their net annual incomes, instead of the system under which they were chargeable by the present law.

RAILWAYS (IRELAND)—ADJOURNED DEBATE.

The Order of the Day for resuming the Adjourned Debate upon the Second Reading of the Railways (Ireland) Bill having been read,

The MARQUESS of GRANBY said, that he hoped the House would extend its indulgence to him whilst he endeavoured to make some observations upon the measure now under the consideration of the House. He could assure the House that it was his anxious desire to abstain from saying anything which could excite a party or personal feeling. He hoped that he might be allowed to say that he heard with the deepest regret the determination which the noble Lord at the head of the Government had come to respecting this measure, for he had hoped from the assurance his noble Friend had given to the noble Lord, that he proposed this measure, not in hostility to Her Majesty's Ministers, but as a means of facilitating the carrying out of the measures proposed by the Government, that the noble Lord would have supported it. The noble Lord the Member for London said he could not support the Bill, and had also expressed his determination, if defeated on it, that he would resign the government of the country. He was quite sure the noble Lord was actuated by high and patriotic motives; but he regretted his determination, as he believed it would be for the injury of Ireland. He would not go into the comparative merits of the measures of the Government and of the Bill now under consideration, as he did not think the two schemes were incompatible. In considering the present plan for the relief of Ireland, he would not enter into the causes that had brought about the present state of that country. Whether it had arisen from unwise legislation, or from the conduct of absentee landlords; whether it had arisen from any peculiarity of disposition in the Irish people, or from the system of letting land which prevailed, or from the subsistence of the people upon a potato diet, he would not affirm; but this he would say, that there were only two practical modes of meeting the evil—either by a diminution of the population, or by an increase of capital. There was no other remedy. Now, the noble Lord the Member for the city of London had said that he had no general plan of emigration. Though he thought a good deal might be done in that direction, still he did not think it would be a cure for the evils which afflicted Ireland. The only other course, therefore, was to introduce capital into Ireland; and as from the state of the country and the want of confidence, from whatever cause, which prevailed in regard to it, private individuals were not prepared to introduce capital, the Bill of his noble Friend the Member for Lynn would be the effectual means of doing so. His noble Friend had shown so clearly the benefits that Ireland must derive from that measure—he had stated so eloquently the employment it would give—the new markets it would open, the increased value to that country in the most essential points—the benefit the poor man would derive, not only from the employment it would give, but from the industrious habits it would cherish, by attaching him to the comforts of his home, that he would not weary the House by going over them again. It was the less necessary, because no one had risen in that House to deny the benefits which the measure would produce to Ireland: though he would refrain from expressing any opinion of his own, perhaps he might be permitted to quote the opinions of others. He would call the attention of the House, in the first place, to a memorial presented to Lord Besborough in 1846. The memorial was from the inhabitants of the city of Dublin, whose opinions certainly ought to be considered on such a question. [The noble Lord read the document, which stated that the memorialists conveyed the strong opinion of the country in favour of railway enterprise, from which they expected the greatest possible good would result; that 40,000 persons were employed by the works then in operation; and they pressed the matter warmly on the attention of his Excellency.] He was not arguing that in a country where employment was ample, where food was abundant, where artificial wants had already been established, where happiness and abundance reigned—he was not arguing that in such a country as that they might not quicken the pulse of that country to a feverish and unhealthy action; but what he was saying was this, that in the present low and unfortunate condition of Ireland, the railway system carefully carried out would produce the most beneficial results. The noble Lord the Member for Bandon had the other evening cited a passage from Sir Robert Kane's work in favour of the present measure; and, perhaps, he might be permitted to quote another to show how greatly Ireland stood in need of improved internal communications. It stated, that the roads in many parts of Ireland were so bad that the farmers were thereby prevented from carrying their grain to market. [The noble Lord read the entire passage.] Sir R. Kane, after relating the benefits which had been felt in the county of Clare from an increase of communication, proceeded—

> "Such are the results of opening out the internal communication of the country; and that ought accordingly to be one of the first objects of a Government really anxious for the improvement of Ireland."

Amongst the other important effects a system of railways must have in Ireland at the present moment, he thought would be the means of facilitating the transference of fish throughout the country. He held in his hand a letter he had received from a gentleman in Ireland who was well versed on this subject, and for whose talents and integrity he could vouch. It was not, however, written for the purpose of assisting his noble Friend's measure, because it was dated, and he received it so far back as the end of October, 1845. The writer said, that at the end of October, 1845—

> "I was in Galway, and was much interested with the proceedings of the Claddagh fishermen. The herrings were on the bank, and I observed at least a thousand boats shoved out to sea. The community of fishermen were under the direction of a king, whom they obeyed more implicitly than did the subjects of any other monarch. The thousand fishing boats brought in each, on an average, 8,000 herrings, which sold at 10*s.* a thousand, or 120 for 1*s.* This number was equally divided among the fishermen; and, before the close of the day, they were sold to purchasers who attended with horses and carts to hawk them over the country. 8,000 herrings, at 10*s.* per thousand, came to 4*l.* per boat; and the gross amount was, therefore, 4,000*l.* per day. The shoals of herrings continued off the head of the bank; but the king of Claddagh would not allow any of the fishing boats to go out until the hawkers returned. Thus four days elapsed; and on the evening of the fourth day the horses and carts arrived, and the fishermen again put to sea."

It was plain from this letter, therefore, that if railways had existed, 4,000*l.* worth of herrings might have been fished on each day, and conveyed throughout Ireland and to Dublin. Thus, for want of railways, many thousands of pounds were lost; and the evil was the more felt, because, for want of these railways, no curing was carried on, in consequence of the very high price of salt. It had been objected to the plan of his noble Friend, that there would be such difficulty in carrying it out—that they would never raise the 16,000,000*l.*—and that the plan must therefore be refused. But he did not think that this country was in such a condition that the sum could not be raised. He would not obtrude any opinion of his upon the House, because it would be of no avail; but if England, in 1847, could not raise 4,000,000*l.* for the starving people of Ireland, there must be something radically wrong in their legislation, and the sooner they retraced their steps the better would it be for the safety and dignity of the country. Another objection was, that the people of England would object to the imposition of a tax for the relief of the people of Ireland. Now, he had read in the *Morning Post* of that morning the following melancholy statement:—

> "The accounts of the ravages produced by destitution still continue to be of the most distressing character. The *Cork Reporter* of Thursday says:—'On last Monday morning there were 44 corpses in the room allotted to the dead at one of the Cork workhouses. Over 100 bodies were conveyed the morning but one after, and, we regret to say, deposited in the small burial ground of one of our most popular suburbs. The ordinary graveyard is too full to receive more coffins. The deaths in the unions of Skibbereen and Bantry may be calculated at 400 weekly, If a month expires before the Temporary Relief Act is in operation, 1,600 victims more, at the rate at which the poor are perishing, will have been added to the appalling catalogue of dead in the two unions only of Bantry and Skibbereen.'"

Then were they to be told that the people of England would not advance any thing to relieve such distress as that? He was sure that the people of England would not give their sanction to any such objection. But if that were an argument at all, it might be an argument against the noble Lord opposite, but it was no argument against his noble Friend; for, although the noble Lord intended to tax the people of England 11,000,000*l.*, the present Bill would not tax the people a single farthing. The late Chancellor of the Exchequer endeavoured to show that the effect of the plan of his noble Friend, would be in reality to tax the people of England. The right hon. Gentleman said we should have to pay the interest on the loan immediately—that we should get no returns, in consequence of the delay which must take place before the railways were open. The right hon. Gentleman did not say, however, that we should have to put on fresh taxes, but that we might need another loan. He was sure that the right hon. Gentleman would be glad to hear that no such result could occur; for there was a clause in the Bill providing, that on the very day upon which the interest of the money becomes payable, it will be receivable from the Irish railways. But that was not all; not only would not a single shilling be taken from the pockets of the English people, but the measure would put money into the Treasury. Here he would take the liberty of reading a passage from the *Spectator* of last week—a paper that certainly could not be supposed to be considerably influenced by admiration of his noble Friend, or of the party to which he belonged:—

> "There was some disposition to anticipate this counter scheme with contempt, on account of the quarter whence it emanates; but it proves more troublesome for Ministers to deal with than they might have supposed. It is not only in the magnificent promises of the project that its strength lies, but also in the elaborate and lucid speech of its proposer—in the pains he has taken to support every part of it with the exact evidence of figures—in the specific nature of that object, and the clear adaptation of the means to the end—in the explicit account of the manner in which the plan

> was expected to work. In all these respects his proposition stood in formidable contrast to the Ministerial plans and statements. It almost looks like reality opposed to shadow. Lord George Bentinck has laid down all his data. They may be disputed—they may be denied—but there they are; they challenge and defy scrutiny."

And there they still are. And though three Chancellors of the Exchequer had risen, one after the other, in opposition to his noble Friend's measure, not one of them had attempted to deny any of the important statements he made. And among these statements was this—that between 600,000*l.* and 700,000*l.* a year would be pat into the Treasury through the increase of the Customs and Excise, under the indirect operation of his measure. Was not that any advantage to the English taxpayers? He said, therefore, that not only was it no part of their plan to take away money from the English Treasury, but they would actually (this had been hitherto uncontradicted) add to the national income near 700,000*l.* An endeavour had been made by the Chancellor of the Exchequer to impeach the calculations of his noble Friend in another respect. The right hon. Gentleman attempted to prove that instead of 112,000, only 45,000 men could obtain employment under the plan of his noble Friend. The House had heard the errors of the right hon. Gentleman's calculations exposed by his hon. Friend the Member for Newark (Mr. Stuart). For instance, instead of taking the total amount of the money from which the employment of labour would be derived, at 6,000,000*l.*, he took it at 4,000,000*l.*; and then he only took the proportion of the whole amount available for labour at only 25 per cent. But, on one of the lines which would be least favourable to his noble Friend's plan—the line from Dublin to Mullingar, &c.—the contract for earthworks (*i. e.*, for labour alone) was 3,600*l.* a mile. Now, the Chancellor of the Exchequer said 1,000,000*l.* would afford employment to 45,000; and hence it followed that 1,000*l.* would employ 45 men. And at this rate 3,600*l.* would employ 162 men, from which it followed that on the right hon. Gentleman's own data the single railway referred to would furnish employment to 162 men per mile. And this was a line most unfavourable to his noble Friend's plan, for the total cost was 10,000*l.* a mile, of which the purchase of the Grand Canal absorbed 3,600*l.* per mile—leaving only 6,400*l.* for the cost of construction. Again, it was said that his noble Friend had no right to state 500,000 as the number of persons who would derive benefit from this plan; for that it was well known that labourers employed on railroads had not the same number of persons dependent upon them as labourers in other species of employment. But, he did not at all understand why, because a man was employed upon a railway, he was the less to be supposed to have a wife or child, or sister dependent upon him, than if he were engaged in agriculture. The right hon. the Chancellor of the Exchequer also said that the really destitute would not be relieved by the railways under the plan of his noble Friend, for that none but able-bodied labourers would be employed upon the railways. How could any great work of improvement, any great reproductive work, be effected without the labour of able-bodied men? It was impossible. But if it was really argued that if out of 500,000 destitute persons in Ireland 112,000 were relieved, that would be no relief to the remainder, it was the most extraordinary argument ever heard of. It was impossible not to see that by such a measure, important benefits would be conferred on all the destitute people of the country. The right hon. Gentleman said, further, that the railway companies did not take the people from the immediate neighbourhood of the lines. Probably not. Probably some would be taken from places more or less distant. The right hon. Gentleman, however, added that all the railways would be in the east, and all the distress in the west of Ireland. Was that the fact? He was afraid that the distress was far more general. And as to the railways being all in the east, why there were lines from Waterford to Limerick, from Cork to Limerick, from Limerick to Wexford, from Cork to Blackrock, from Cork to Waterford, from Cork to Bandon, from Limerick to Ennis, from Dublin to Galway? But, taking the two statements of the right hon. Gentleman together, viz., that the railway companies would take their labourers from a distance, and that the railways would be on the east, and the distress upon the west, did it not follow that the labour would not be derived from the distressed districts? It was said, that the result of his noble Friend's plan would be to take labour from the agriculture of the country. If he thought that that would be the case, it would be a great and serious objection to the measure; but when they heard the accounts of the numbers of those who were distressed—when they heard the learned Member for Dublin say that there would be 2,000,0000 in absolute distress for want of food—he feared there was no danger of a deficiency of labour for agricultural employment. He much feared, on the contrary, that when they had done all they could, there would yet remain much distress unrelieved—much labour unemployed. He found it stated in the correspondence of the Board of Works, (January, 1846)—

> "It is calculated that there are 310,000 small holdings in Ireland of not more than five acres each, and 250,000 of more than five and less than fifteen acres; the former class comprising 1,550,000 persons almost always in distress; and the other class comprising 1,250,000 persons never much above distress, but now in absolute want; so that there are 2,800,000 persons in extreme destitution at this moment."

He feared, therefore, that there need be no apprehension of a deficiency in labour, even after they had done all that was possible to employ the people. It was said that Irishmen were not well able to work on railways, or that if able they were unwilling. He found it stated in a recent work, *Kane's Industrial Resources of Ireland*, that the average height of the Englishman was 58½ inches, and of the Irishman 71 inches; that the average weight of the former was 151lbs., of the latter 155lbs.; and that the average strength of the one was estimated at 403lbs., and of the other at 432lbs. Therefore, there was at all events no physical deficiency. And as to the habits of the people of Ireland, he really deprecated these invidious comparisons between them and those of this country. They were as much our fellow-countrymen as the people of England. They had fought by our side in many a contest, and were our fellow-subjects of the same great empire. But so far from the habits of the Irish people being opposed to labour, it was stated (in the work just referred to, and other recent works on Ireland) that they had made great advances in industrial occupations of late years; and it was well said in the work he had already quoted from—

> "The present is a favourable opportunity for giving a salutary direction to the nascent energies of Ireland."

Again, he found the following passage in a letter from Capt. O'Brien to Mr. Trevelyan:

> "Dec. 26, 1846.—I think the majority of the labourers have done their duty; and considering how they were circumstanced, the population have behaved very well. Their patience has been beyond all praise. The labourers, indeed, see that what they are doing is of no real value; and (as they say) their heart is not in it. They are naturally quick in feeling, and of course can take no interest in the completion of a task which, though it affords them relief from starvation, is evidently useless and unproductive."

It was in the highest degree natural that men should not work with much energy in tasks they knew to be useless. The right hon. Gentleman the late Chancellor of the Exchequer, said that he was "ready to bow to the opinions of the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Sunderland." But it soon appeared that it was only "a bow." For the right hon. Gentleman, after saying that he had learnt from the career of the right hon. Member for Sunderland what great results could be effected in this country by capital and enterprise, went on to say that if Ireland were let alone, the same result would one day be produced by the same course. That did not seem to him more conclusive or convincing than if one were to say, because the climate of the south of France is favourable to the growth of the grape, and the climate of this country the reverse, therefore, if you want to raise grapes in this country, do as they do in France, and resort to no hothouses or other artificial means. Unless the House aided the construction of railways in Ireland they would never be established there. One of the best lines was from Limerick to Ennis. It was 137 miles long. The population upon it was upwards of 500,000. It took up the traffic of 100 miles of river; it would yield, it was estimated, a dividend of nine per cent—that the cost would be only 8,000*l*. a mile. Yet he had a letter in his hand assuring him that it was impossible to proceed with the line, entirely on account of the want of money, owing to the depressed state of the country. He hoped the House would take a liberal course with respect to Ireland. In that hope he was confirmed by the spirit which generally preponderated. In his opinion the Bill of his noble Friend would confer an immediate and permanent benefit upon the people of Ireland, with the least possible cost to the people of this country; nay, not only without taking one sixpence from them, but actually putting 700,000*l*. yearly into the Treasury. He hoped, however, that in reckoning up the probable returns from this measure, they would not look solely to the moneyed value of it. He trusted they would take a nobler and loftier, a more enlarged and elevated view of it—that they would look to the permanent benefit which must be derived from the increased prosperity of Ireland—to the benefits which must result from rendering that which was a constant source of weakness, and a constant drain on our resources, a principle of vitality, of vigour, and prosperity. And he ventured to predict that if they passed that Bill, they would look back hereafter with pride and gratification to the day when they thus consented to act generously towards a suffering and a sister isle.

Mr. W. BROWN was understood to say, that he agreed with the noble Lord (Lord G. Bentinck) when he said that the British people would not grudge 4,000,000*l.* to assist their fellow-countrymen in Ireland in their present distress; but, while he agreed with the noble Lord in that statement, he must dissent from the principle that the industrious classes of England should be laid under any taxation for the benefit of the Irish landlords. He had risen, however, rather to deal with the Bill itself, than with the arguments that might have arisen out of it. That Bill he considered as having been issued into the world almost stillborn, as he could not believe that such a measure would ever be carried into effect. He did not see how any Government could expect that British proprietors, or any other proprietors, would come forward and allow their property to be mortgaged when they had more advantageous and more secure investments for their money. He spoke advisedly when he said that people were lending their money at six, seven, and eight per cent on the security of the best railway shares in the kingdom, with this condition annexed, that should the market value of the shares fall, the borrowers would be bound to give the lenders new and sufficient securities. If this were a mere charitable bequest, it might be considered on other grounds; but it was, on the contrary, a speculation which, while it would be of no advantage to Ireland, could hardly fail to be a disastrous one to the speculators. Every railway in Ireland, with the exception of three, was at a discount; and he believed the premium on the Dublin and Kingstown line was caused by their having a large sum of money borrowed on a low rate of interest. There was, in fact, a want of confidence in the Irish people on the part of capitalists. Why this want of confidence existed, he could not pretend to say. He simply stated the fact. It had been said, in answer to statements from that side of the House, that money was advanced by Government to assist the Liverpool and Manchester Railway. He admitted that in some circumstances, when a portion of the money requisite to carry out an undertaking—say one-third—was wanted, it might be expedient for Government to interpose, and so assist the parties as to give them a fair chance of relieving themselves from their difficulties; but it was another thing when parties required advances to enable them to carry out the whole of their works. It had been said that the loans proposed by the noble Lord would not affect the monetary interest of the country; but could there be the least doubt upon this subject by those who paid attention to the question? Why, he saw it stated in *The Times* of that day, that the funds falling one per cent made a deficiency of 8,000,000*l.* to the public creditor. It was not merely in this view of the matter that the proposal of the noble Lord was unadvisable; but they must consider to what an extent so large an application of the public money would prevent the Chancellor of the Exchequer from giving a favourable hearing to any one of the many applications made to him for relief from taxation, such as the duties on tea, tobacco, soap, and many others that might be mentioned. The Government were, no doubt, disposed to give relief as far as possible; but if they were overwhelmed with demands like that made by the noble Lord, it was out of the question to suppose that they would be in a position to do so.

Colonel MURE trusted, that in any remarks which he might make, it would not be understood that he committed himself as hostile to the general principle of promoting, even by judicious advances from the public purse, the extension of railway communication in Ireland. On the contrary, he was of opinion that there were no means which might, within reasonable conditions and limitations, be more fairly or effectually applied to develop the resources of that country; but he considered the measure now before the House to be unreasonable and exorbitant in itself, and its advantages more than questionable even as regarded Ireland, while its effects would be most injurious to the general interests, and more especially to the public credit and commercial character of the United Kingdom. It was not his intention to enlarge upon the many, and, in his opinion, conclusive arguments, that had been urged against this measure in the previous course of the debate; but there was one objection which, while it had been but little urged on the attention of the House, appeared to him to be one of paramount importance; he alluded to the flagrant public immorality of the measure. There was no one who was more sincerely convinced than he was of the purity, patriotism, and philanthropy of the motives by which the noble Lord had been influenced in bringing forward his Bill; but it was not with the intentions of the noble Lord, but with the tendency of his measure, that he had to deal; and he did not hesitate to characterize it as an extensive scheme for the encouragement of railway gambling, under the auspices of the State. He trusted he should be able to prove to the satisfaction of the House, that, in making use of this expression, he was guilty neither of misrepresentation nor of exaggeration. What, he might ask, was the definition of gambling, either in railways or in any other class of joint-stock enterprise? One definition of it he understood to be the staking of money on insecure and creditless adventures, at the lowest denomination, in the hope that with a proportionally heavy risk of total loss, some happy turn in the wheel of fortune would increase those stakes to profits of a high denomination. He did not believe there was any impartial Member of that House who was prepared to say that Irish railways were not insecure and creditless adventures. They had only to look at the utter prostration of their stock, as showing what was the verdict of the public as to the value of such investments. Whatever the noble Lord the Member for Lynn might say, that was the only true and competent criterion; it was the only one to which the British House of Commons, as the guardians of the public purse, could be justified in deferring; and that verdict was conclusive that Irish railways were insecure and creditless adventures. Now, the whole scope of the arguments, as of the measure of the noble Lord, was, to persuade the people of this country, by the interposition of the credit of the State upon an enormous scale, to embark their property in these depreciated and discredited schemes, as if they were safe and profitable investments. He did not doubt that, by this proceeding, a certain stimulus might be given to the value of those shares; but he believed that it would be but temporary, and that matters would soon subside into the state of apathy in which they were at present. Whatever portion of the public might derive benefit from the measure, it would be ultimately found, from ruinous experience, that an essentially bad concern could not be made an essentially good concern, even by the Legislature consenting, reluctantly, and influenced by a loud cry of sympathy with Irish distress, to become a participator to the extent of two-thirds of the loss. It was only through the influence of some delusion, that men could be induced to believe that what they had been accustomed to regard as valueless, had suddenly, without any essential change in its character, become of value. And this delusion it was the object of the noble Lord's Bill to create to the extent of 8,000,000*l.* of private capital, and 16,000,000*l.* of prostituted public credit: this was what he called an encouragement to gambling and undue speculation, under the auspices of the State. The noble Lord, in the able speech with which he had introduced this Bill, said, that one of the advantages of the measure would be, to enable Irish landlords to sell their shares and turn the money to account in the improvement of the country; but the noble Lord told them, almost in the same breath, that the best mode of turning money to account for the improvement of Ireland, was to construct railways. The noble Lord surely did not mean that a man who was unable to pay up calls to the amount of 2*l.* or 3*l.* annually upon some twenty-five or fifty shares, was likely to become a very enterprising improver of the country. He could not but hope that the House would refuse its sanction to what he considered—however meritorious the motives of the promoters of the Bill might be—a great act of public profligacy. It was scarcely a year ago since that House resounded with denunciations of the pernicious spirit of railway speculation that then prevailed throughout the country. That spirit was now happily laid, or comparatively dormant. He trusted the House would not become instrumental in conjuring it up into renewed activity, and sending it across the Channel as another curse to assist the demon of famine in still further tormenting the unhappy population of Ireland.

MR. ALDERMAN THOMPSON thought that as the hon. and gallant Gentleman who had just sat down had described the proposal of the noble Lord as a measure of legislative gambling under the sanction of that House, it was much to be regretted that the country had not had the benefit of the services of the hon. and gallant Member at an earlier period in that House, when he might have had it in his power to stop the ruinous Irish Railway Bills in their progress through Parliament—measures which were considered of such vast importance to Ireland, that both Houses of Parliament even suspended the usual Standing Orders in their favour. The hon. Member for South Lancashire had stated that, in the present state of the money market, railway companies were borrowing money at 6 and 7 per cent; and he was sure that, from the position which he held in the commercial world, what the hon. Member stated was from his own personal knowledge; he stated that there was no prospect that money could be borrowed at 3½ per cent, as was proposed by the noble Lord. Why, that was the greater argument in support of the measure; for if the railway schemes for Ireland were good, this was the very time that the Government and the country ought to lend their credit to aid them. An hon. Gentleman opposite had quoted the example of the United States of America, and had said that they (he supposed the Government) never interfered in works which could be done by private enterprise. Let him ask the hon. Gentleman how all the great railroads and canals in the United States had been executed. By far the larger portion had been executed by each particular State, which had pledged its credit for raising the money, and for guaranteeing the interest. He believed that the main objections to this measure might be divided into two: first, that it would interfere with works which ought to be carried out by private capital; and. secondly, that it would be unwise, impolitic, and contrary to the principles of political economy, for Parliament or the Government to interfere. With regard to the first, a great many precedents had already been cited, in which Parliament had raised large sums for turnpike-roads and canals, not only in England and Scotland, but in our colonies, and also in Ireland. It had been said that these were old examples; that knowledge and practical wisdom had made great advances since; that these precedents, therefore, were not applicable. How stood the fact ? So late as 1836 a Select Committee of that House had been specially appointed to inquire how public works could be best carried on in Ireland, and three or four Members of the present Government were members of that Committee; and in their first report they stated that of the many remedial measures proposed for the improvement of Ireland, none had created less difference of opinion, and had been more recommended by all persons, than the proposal for the execution of public works, and that the Committee concurred in opinion that there were reasons of justice and policy for extending to that country public aid for that purpose; and they suggested that the Government should lend its support by loans for such works, and by making grants to a moderate extent for other objects of national importance; and they called the attention of the House to the extraordinary distress of the labouring population in certain districts, increased by the scarcity and dearness of potatoes, upon which they depended for food. That was the report of the Select Committee in 1836, and it was not treated like other reports and laid upon the shelf. So late as 1841 Her Majesty's Government proposed a grant of 5,000,000*l.* for the aid of public works in Ireland. The noble Lord the Member for the West Riding of Yorkshire, then Secretary for Ireland (Lord Morpeth), actually introduced a Bill for that purpose, which Bill was read a first time and committed. He understood, for he was not present, that the right hon. Gentleman (the Chancellor of the Exchequer) had criticised the names of the Members on the back of the present Bill. He did not know whether the right hon. Gentleman meant to cast any imputation at him (Mr. Alderman Thompson) or on him; he would not take the trouble to inquire; but he thought, if the right hon. Gentleman meant to do so, that his (Mr. Alderman Thompson's) conduct in that House for twenty-seven years would be his best defence against such an imputation. He would tell the right hon. Gentleman that he sat in that House with a mind as pure and circumstances as independent as the right hon. Gentleman's. He held in his hand a copy of the Bill introduced by the noble Lord (Lord Morpeth), and he found at the back of that Bill the names of "Lord Morpeth, the Attorney General for Ireland, and Mr. Alderman Thompson." Further, the noble Lord had done him the honour of reciting his name in the body of the Bill. The 9th clause enacted that there should be three directors of the company, and that the first directors should be Sir I. L. Goldsmid, J. Abel Smith, and William Thompson. Then it was stated that the proposed railroads were in the north and east of Ireland, and that the distress was in the south, and that it would be impossible to employ the most distressed portion of the people upon railways which were in progress in the north. But how happened it that there was less distress in the north of Ireland? The potatoes had failed in the north as well as in other parts. The reason was, because labour had been provided for the population in the north; the railways were the very reason why the people were not distressed. But the noble Lord (Lord G. Bentinck) had made it obligatory in his Bill upon contractors for railroads to provide cottages for their labourers, upon the same system as in this country; and he saw no reason, therefore, why the labourers might not go from the south of Ireland, where there was little work, to the railways in the north. He admitted that the value of Government securities had been considerably depressed; but he did not consider that this was an objection to the measure. Perhaps the principal cause might be the great and disproportionate amount of our imports. The noble Lord had stated that he could not exactly say what was the amount of money he might require for Ireland; that it might be 7,000,000*l.*, or 9,000,000*l.*, or 10,000,000*l.* Now, he (Mr. Alderman Thompson) said, that the 4,000,000*l.* which would be required by his noble Friend's plan, might be taken as part of what might be required by the noble Lord. Then, if Government had to borrow a sum (and a large sum must be borrowed in some form or other), why not adopt his noble Friend's plan? His noble Friend said, "I want no increased taxation, all I want is for the Government to lend its credit." How? He saw no difficulty. If the Railway Commissioners, as required by this Bill—and he had never in his experience seen a Bill which had been more misunderstood or misrepresented—if the Commissioners did as required in clause 20, they, being empowered to exercise their judgment when applied to for advances of money, would not recommend such advances unless the security was good. He apprehended, if Government guaranteed an interest of 3½ per cent, there was sufficient capital in the country, and that parties would come forward and place funds in the hands of Government or the Railway Commissioners before the Government could be required to part with one shilling. But, if he had not been misinformed out of doors, he had been told that Government had, within a very few days, consented that the East India Company should give railroads in India a loan of 2,000,000*l.* of money. [An hon. MEMBER: The East India Company.] That was a distinction without a difference, as all the liabilities of the Company were guaranteed by the Government. On Tuesday last the noble Lord the Member for Hertford (Lord Mahon) asked the right hon. Baronet the President of the Board of Control whether the Government had received any report or papers respecting railways in India, and whether there were among them any that might, without detriment to the public service, be laid on the Table? The right hon. Gentleman replied that the report of the commission sent out to India in 1845 to examine into the subject had been received, and he had no objection to lay that report before the House. The hon. Member for Montrose (Mr. Hume) was not quite satisfied with this answer, and put this question—"Whether the right hon. Baronet had any objection to add a copy of any resolutions or despatches which had been sent out by the Court of Directors regarding railways?" The right hon. Gentleman, however, declined to lay those despatches upon the Table, on the ground that certain terms proposed to the railway companies were under consideration. He (Mr. Thompson) could easily conceive, if important negotiations had been going on, that might be a reason for not laying papers connected with them before the House. The principles of the railways had been agreed upon, and the question of the grants; but the parties required a term of thirty years, whilst the Government said they must take less. He put it to the House, whether it were just and right to promote railways in India, and not in Ireland? and he hoped that, before this debate ended, Her Majesty's Government would do the House the justice to let it have those papers. His right hon. Friend the late Chancellor of the Exchequer had objected to the measure on the ground that it was unfair, inasmuch as it would raise the value of railway shares; and he had referred to a list of shareholders in Irish railroads in the blue book, and he found that two-thirds were resident in England. He was surprised at this objection of his right hon. Friend, as the great objection had been that English capital did not flow into Ireland; and when that capital did flow there and was placed in jeopardy, and when it was proposed to uphold that capital, the right hon. Gentleman turned round and said, "Oh, but it will encourage gambling." But when alterations were made in the Tariff, it put money into the pockets of the holders of the articles on which the duties were reduced, as in the recent cases of sugar and brandy. It at least came to this—a balance of good and evil. He supported the Bill of his noble Friend, because in his conscience he believed it would afford a prompt and profitable employment to the labouring population of Ireland.

Mr. BROWN explained: The hon. Member had made him say that railways were borrowing money at the rate of 7 or 8 per cent. What he really said was, that the shareholders were borrowing at that rate; but there was a wide difference between the railways and the shareholders.

Mr. F. FRENCH could assure the noble Lord the Member for Lynn, that whether this measure were successful or unsuccessful, Ireland owed him a deep debt of gratitude, for the manliness with which he had come forward and admitted the magnitude of the evils under which the country was suffering, as well as for proposing measures of a magnitude and importance which, whether successful or not, would at least point out the way for the legislation of future Governments. He cared not what the Government might hereafter be; but after the declarations of the noble Lord, all future Governments must follow in the broad and open path which he had laid down, and grapple with those master evils under which the country was suffering. The narrow and petty system of legislation under which Ireland was suffering, must eventually and finally be put a stop to by the measure which had been brought forward by the noble Lord. Before entering further into this question, he wished to reply to certain accusations which had been made against his country by the right hon. the Chancellor of the Exchequer, and by the hon. Member for Inverness. He cared not from what side of the House these attacks might come; but so long as he had a seat in the House, he should raise his voice against them. The first circumstance to which his right hon. Friend had alluded, was, that a sum now nearly amounting to 100,000*l.* was borrowed from the Government by the Grand Canal, of which neither principal nor interest had ever been repaid. Now, he would state the facts of the case, and then leave the House to judge whether from that circumstance it was fair to attribute either dishonesty or neglect of Irish engagements to Irishmen generally. The sum originally lent was 47,000*l.*, and at that time the income of the Grand Canal was about 50,000*l.* a year. But the directors were anxious to extend their canal to Ballinasloe, and they came to Government to negotiate for a loan. Had they gone to private capitalists—had they gone to any but those who had the disposal of the public funds—they would, of course, have been obliged to give security upon that part of the canal which was already so productive. But instead of acting this prudent part, the Government of the day were careless enough to take the security upon the extension line, which ran wholly and solely through a bog, which, it was clear, never could be remunerative. From day to day, the interest had been accumulating till the present time, when a compromise was offered of 10,000*l.* He thought, therefore, that they could not blame the Irishmen, but the Government that lent the money. Then there was the sum of 12,000*l.* borrowed by the great city of Cork. How was it possible, if proper security had been taken in the first instance, that there could have been the slightest difficulty in raising this trifling sum from Cork? The next case was that of the Ulster Canal, which had borrowed 23,000*l.*, but the proceeds had never paid the interest even of the original sum; and it was to be remembered that all the shareholders were English. The Government might foreclose the mortgage, and enter upon the canal, but it was clear that the shareholders were not to blame. The next, and he thought the last case, alluded to by his right hon. Friend, was that of the sum of nearly 100,000*l.* being lent to build bridges in the city of Limerick. Now, could it be conceived that in this case the Government had taken no other security than that of the tolls levied on the bridges. In fact, the money was never looked upon in any other light than as a Government grant, and no one imagined that there was the slightest chance of a single farthing ever being brought back to the English Exchequer. He wished he had been aware of this circumstance in 1835. In 1822, when there was a famine in Ireland, Government sent down, unsolicited, orders to stop the collection of the cess in the county of Roscommon, the amount uncollected there being 6,000*l.* For fourteen years nothing more was heard of the matter; but, at the expiration of that time, Government said, "You owe us 6,000*l.*; levy it and pay it." The grand jury refused to make a presentment on the subject, on the ground of the lapse of time, and that property had changed hands in the interval; on which the then Chancellor of the Exchequer, Mr. Spring Rice, brought in a Bill which compelled the repayment of the money. Had he known of the debt due by the city of Limerick, it would have added force to the opposition he gave to that measure. Then, with regard to the hon. Member for Inverness. That hon. Member had very justly praised the conduct pursued by Lord Macdonald, by Macleod of Macleod, and by other Scottish proprietors, in availing themselves of the provisions of the Drainage Act; but when he censured, as he appeared to censure, the Irish proprietors for not availing themselves of the same facilities, he must tell the hon. Member that he only knew half the subject he was talking of. He knew what was the conduct of the Scottish proprietors; but he knew nothing of what was the conduct of the Irish proprietors. In the county of Roscommon alone, one individual had applied for 40,000*l.* under the provisions of the Drainage Act, and others had applied for smaller sums; but questions upon this subject had been raised both in the Court of Exchequer and in Chancery, and it had been decided, after much investigation and expense, that, owing to a deficiency in the Act, its provisions were not available to tenants for life. Upon the whole subject he had great pleasure in referring to the invaluable returns moved for by his hon. Friend the Member for Kilkenny, bringing out the fact, which could not be sufficiently dunned into English ears, that since the Union 9,000,000*l.* sterling had been borrowed for Ireland, of which 7,000,000*l.* and a few thousands had been repaid; and that, during the same period, 18,000,000*l.* had been borrowed for England and Scotland, of which only 6,000,000*l.* had been repaid. The hon. Member for Westmoreland had alluded to the Bill brought in in 1839 by the noble Lord (Morpeth) then Chief Secretary for Ireland, for the execution of railways by the State. Now, he had objected very strongly to that Bill; and he believed it was chiefly owing to his exertions, and those of other Irish Members, that the Bill was not persevered in. The same objections which he felt towards that Bill, he felt towards the Bill of the noble Lord the Member for Lynn. He believed that that Bill would beneficially affect the shareholders. He believed that if that measure were adopted, the shares, which were now at a heavy discount, would rise to a high premium; and it would give him great pleasure, for the sake of the shareholders, if such were the case. But he was not disposed, for an object like that, to pledge the credit of the State. He took it, that the noble Lord had exaggerated the effect which his measure would have upon the sole result regarding which they were at all anxious—the employment of unskilled labour. He presumed that in the 1,500 miles of railway which the noble Lord calculated there were to execute, he did not include the 120 miles already executed. [Lord GEORGE BENTINCK: No.] Well, then, there were twelve Acts passed in 1845, providing for the execution of 545 miles of railway. But he had good reason to believe, that of those Acts, the greater portion of the earthworks was already completed; and in some cases, even the rails were laid. During the last year, twenty-two Railway Acts had been passed, authorizing the execution of 800 or 900 miles of railway; but a considerable portion of these were extensions of lines formerly passed, which did not require assistance; while, looking at the localities of some of the others, he would say it was as well they should not be finished. The reason why he opposed the Bill of Lord Morpeth was, not that he was opposed to the construction of railways by the State; for to that principle he was highly favourable: but because the project was a partial one. He would have supported the measure, if it had proposed the construction of branch lines to the north, south, and west, so that every portion of Ireland might have benefited equally by the measure; but, instead of that, it was proposed that the whole of the money should be expended in making a line from Dublin to Cork. Now, the measure of the noble Lord did not affect more than one-fourth of Ireland. He had, therefore, to choose between two things: either he must support the measures of Government, or the measure proposed by the noble Lord the Member for Lynn; and he must say, that he considered that one of the measures proposed by Government—he alluded to that for employing the people in the improvement of property—was of more importance, and more likely to lead to beneficial results, than the measure of the noble Lord. In addition to its tendency to develop the resources of the country and add to the supply of food, he would say that it would indirectly secure the very measure sought for by the noble Lord. He believed that the improvement of the country would aid the formation of railways, and for this reason he must support the measures proposed by the Government.

MR. NEWDEGATE was anxious to say a few words upon the subject, as a Member of an English constituency, that, he was sorry to say, were beginning to feel the distressing effects of those measures which the House had passed during the last year. He begged distinctly to repudiate the insinuation that he was seeking to add to the burdens and taxation of the people by the support of this measure of the noble Lord. The loan which was sought for under this Bill, was intended to act as a substitute for the money which would otherwise be wrung from the hard-working people of this country for the relief of their suffering brethren in Ireland; and he must also distinctly assert, that when the 16,000,000*l.* were sought for under this measure proposed by the noble Lord, that sum was assigned as the extreme limit of the measure for raising money; but it was no criterion of the amount that must necessarily be raised to meet the exigencies of Ireland. The hon. Member who had just sat down had adverted to the statements made the other night by the right hon. the Chancellor of the Exchequer; and he (Mr. Newdegate) must say that the hon. Member had given a satisfactory explanation why the loans alluded to had not been repaid. But suppose that good reasons had not been assigned for these losses, were they to be told that because loans amounting in all to the sum of 575,000*l.* lent during a series of years, risked on bad security, and in no case taking the guarantee of reproductive works in the sense in which railways were productive, were they to be told that this was an absolute bar in the way of any more money being lent to Ireland? But they must remember that all the loans which had been lent to railways in Ireland, had been repaid. If the Railway Board properly performed its duty, not only would they secure the country from loss by selecting those lines of railway which would afford good security; but, more than that, they would be able to limit the amount raised under the powers of the Act to an amount which would be well secured under the railways, taking into account the districts through which the railways were to pass. He was very much surprised indeed when he heard the right hon. Member for Portsmouth and the Chancellor of the Exchequer speak of railways as purely local works. They said that if the railways were to pass through the destitute parts of the country, the security would be bad; or if they passed through the rich parts of the country, it would not meet the extreme exigency of Irish destitution. Now this argument was based upon the fallacy that a railway was a purely local work. One would think that these right hon. Gentlemen had never heard of such a thing as a through traffic. In the scheme of the noble Lord the Member for Lynn, great branch lines were included, and those lines must reach through the centre to the west and the south of Ireland, where the destitution was extreme. He need not tell any hon. Member, who, like himself, had ever sat upon a Railway Committee, that the best lines were always considered those which afforded a through traffic. Another argument had been adduced against this plan, that it violated the principles of political economy. Now, really to talk of political economy with reference to Ireland at the present time, seemed like reverting to theories which had been long since abandoned. But if they would apply the rule of leaving private capital and private enterprise to effect this work, what was the prospect of Ireland obtaining railways at least for many years to come? It was now eleven years since the first Railway Acts had been passed for Ireland. What had been done since that time? It had been shown by the noble Lord, that during those years English Acts had been passed sanctioning railways, which would pass over 7,200 miles. Of these, there were completed 2,600 miles, leaving incomplete 4,600. During the same eleven years, Acts had been passed for Ireland sanctioning railways which would cover 1,523 miles. Of these there had been completed 123 miles, leaving incomplete 1,400. Now, in answer to what had fallen from the hon. Member for Roscommon, suppose his statement was correct, that the larger portion of the earthworks on some of the railways had been completed, how did that affect the argument? If so, it was true that labour would not be so employed; but then it was also true that the capital would not be wanted. Therefore, he contended that this did not affect the argument at all. But he might add, that as the noble Lord had allowed for the completion of 164 miles of railway, the arguments adduced by the hon. Member for Roscommon did not affect his calculations at all. He had already stated the number of miles of railway sanctioned for England and Ireland; and it must be remembered that the necessity for them was tried by the same tribunal in both cases. Now, what did they find? Why, that the capital and credit of England had completed one-third of those lines which had been sanctioned by Parliament as necessary for the accommodation of the English people, or 28 per cent of the lines so sanctioned; whilst the capital and credit of Ireland had only completed one-twelfth, or 8 per cent of those railways which the House had declared to be necessary for the accommodation of Ireland. If this was all that private capital and private enterprise was able to do for Ireland during the last eleven years, he would ask the House to consider the present state of Ireland—the debilitating effects of the sad calamity with which Providence had afflicted her, and to say what prospect there was now of private capital and private enterprise being likely to supply Ireland with railway accommodation. But what added still more to this argument was the striking fact mentioned by the right hon. Gentleman the Member for the University of Cambridge (Mr. Goulburn). He stated that three-fourths of the capital which had completed this miserable twelfth of the lines necessary for Ireland was English capital, and not Irish. If that was the case, he thought there needed no farther illustration of his argument—that to look, in the present state of Ireland, for the completion of those undertakings which were essential to her prosperity, to private enterprise alone, was to expect impossibilities. Well, but notwithstanding the strict application of the rules of political economy, the right hon. the Chancellor of the Exchequer had admitted that there might be exceptions in cases of emergency. Now, he thought, after all they had heard and seen, there could not be a doubt of the emergency. There could be no doubt that the Irish people were destitute, nor could there be any doubt that private capital in Ireland—weak as it was before, but doubly absorbed now—was quite insufficient to meet the wants of the community. The right hon. Member for Portsmouth (Mr. Baring) had followed in the same strain. He said, that in case of emergency it was the duty of the State to find means for assisting private capital in great undertakings. But the right hon. Gentleman seemed afterwards to regret that observation, or, at least, to make it appear that this was not an emergency to justify the loan; for he said, that in the present circumstances of unexampled emergency, it would be unwise to deal with great and important questions of this nature. Now, if that observation had been applied to the poor law brought in by the Government, it would have been quite as just as when applied to the measure of the noble Lord the Member for Lynn. But he would not repeat the arguments which had been so ably adduced, to show that this was an emergency which justified—which, in his belief, called for—the immediate advance of the credit of the country to the relief of Irish destitution; and, as he had said before, to the economising and diminishing the pressure which would inevitably fall upon the people of this country, if the system proposed by Government were adopted. He would, therefore, come at once to a point which he was most anxious to touch upon; and that was, that it had been asserted by three right hon. Gentlemen—one of them an extant Chancellor of the Exchequer, and the other two ex-Chancellors of the Exchequer—that the financial and monetary condition of the country was such as to preclude the House from adopting the proposition of the noble Lord the Member for Lynn. That the right hon. Member for Portsmouth should have stated this, he confessed did surprise him; because he had voted for the proposition of the Government, in 1839, to advance five millions for the construction of railways in Ireland. Consider what was then the condition of the finances and of the money market of this country. In that year, the bullion at the Bank never exceeded 7,000,000*l.*; at one time it was as low as 2,500,000*l.* In that year, too, there was a deficiency in the revenue to the extent of 1,381,258*l.*; and there was not a deficiency in that year alone, but it followed two years of deficient revenue, and it again was followed by three years of still greater deficiency. Yet at that time the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Portsmouth voted for a proposal something similar, though not so comprehensive, as the measure of his noble Friend. What was their position now? They had thirteen millions of bullion in the Bank, and no deficiency in the revenue. He admitted that there were, however, serious signs of a commercial crisis, which would, according to our present monetary system, be followed by greater monetary difficulties. But what had they been told by the hon. Member for Westmoreland (Mr. Alderman Thompson)? That hon.

Member had said that the money required could be raised without difficulty. What, too, had they been told by the hon. Member for Sunderland? The hon. Member for Sunderland also said, that the money could be raised without difficulty; and the hon. Member gave a sufficient reason for his belief. There was in this country a large amount of capital, which could only be invested in Government security, and which was now locked up for want of a proper channel for its circulation; and he did not see what better could be done for the distress of Ireland, and the relief of England from the burden which that distress would impose, than to provide such a channel; and he could conceive no better channel than that offered in the measure of his noble Friend. He admitted that the signs of financial, commercial, and monetary embarrassment were most ominous; and upon that point he could say nothing stronger than that which had fallen from the late Chancellor of the Exchequer (Mr. Goulburn). The right hon. Gentleman said that—

> "They knew by the last returns that they had a surplus revenue, something short of three millions"—

(that was instead of a deficiency of more than one million in 1839, when the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Portsmouth supported a similar measure)—

> "That they also knew that six millions were required to be raised, in order to meet the awful calamity with which Ireland was visited; so that, so far from a surplus, there was likely to be a deficiency; and the present moment was likely to be one of much greater financial embarrassment than had occurred for a long period."

He was afraid that there was great reason for thinking the right hon. Gentleman right. What were the circumstances of so ominous a character? In the course of the last and few preceding years, the House had sanctioned a great relaxation of import duties. They had consequently increased our imports, until they were altogether disproportioned to our exports—a state of circumstances which, in former years, had led to great financial difficulties—as in the years preceding the difficulties of 1825; and the necessity of importing large quantities of corn added to the embarrassment, as in the years immediately preceding 1839. Those were two reasons for deeming the present season a very ominous one; but was he to be told that because there was a prospect of commercial difficulties in this country, therefore the people of Ireland were to be left to starve? If there was to be commercial difficulty, would the people bear taxation more easily when it came? Would the money which it was proposed to expend under the system adopted by Her Majesty's Government, force the people of this country into monetary difficulties less than the measure of his noble Friend? He should say that if ever there was a time when it was the duty of a Government to alleviate the pressure of taxation, it was a time of commercial difficulty and stagnation of trade. He said that the measure of his noble Friend was a measure calculated to alleviate the burden which Irish distress would cast on the taxpayers of England. Let them consider for a moment what were the circumstances with respect to railway enterprise which had occurred at the beginning of this year. The commercial sky had then been serene, capital had then been abundant, and employment rife. It was not eighteen months ago that he had heard complaints that money had been too cheap, and that the holders of it could not find for it a safe investment, and that there had been reason to apprehend that our capitalists might be induced to invest their money in dangerons securities, such as those speculations in America in which they had embarked in the years 1837 and 1838. But that capital had taken the direction of railway enterprise; and what had been the next difficulty? The Bank had raised its rate of discount; and such had been the apprehended difficulty of making the railway deposits, that the whole commercial world had been thrown into a fever. He was then about to read a statement, showing how that difficulty had been met. It was well known that he deprecated the severity of our monetary system. Let them look back to the period when we had been on the verge of financial embarrassment, and let them see how that had arisen. It had arisen from the fact that our railway shareholders had been expecting to pay 11,000,000*l.* in money to the Bank of England. How had they been absolved from that difficulty? He would, with the permission of the House, proceed to read a statement upon that subject, by a gentleman whose knowledge and accuracy he could guarantee, but whose name he would, for obvious reasons, not mention. That statement was an extract from a letter, dated 2nd of December, 1846, and was as follows:—

> "I have pointed out that when Sir Robert Peel came into office, the liabilities of the Bank of England to the public were only 25,184,000*l.* Some time after that the Bank broker was con-

stantly buying stock; and when that is the case there is a large herd of speculators, who somehow or other know what is going on in the Bank parlour. Well, they were all at work, and Consols rose from 89 to above par. I recollect seeing about that time a return, which showed that the Bank had 1,500,000*l.* more public securities than before this rise took place. Now, to prove my case—viz,, how the currency had been tampered with, I shall take my position from the first return under the new Act, from the one at the time there was such a pressure to pay the railway deposits, and from the last return—viz., the 21st of November. You are aware that the division into issue and banking departments is a mere piece of gammon. I shall consider, then, only how much in the pound they can pay in money on their liabilities on the occasion cited—for there can be no doubt that the Bank are responsible to pay their depositors in money, as well as the notes, and I wish you to understand the deposits are really money left in their hands, for only by a payment into the Bank of notes or bullion, can a deposit account arise. The reason why the mercantile world were driven to get their bills discounted at the Bank in the spring of this year was, that the private bankers had to pay money into the Bank for the railway deposits; and this money they were obliged to call in from their customers by refusing to discount any longer for them. The merchants then got their bills discounted at the Bank; with the notes they received they paid their bankers; and this enabled the bankers to pay back the notes to the Bank for the railway deposits. I will now take the first return, and from the gross amount of notes issued, I deduct the notes in the Bank, which gives the notes in circulation; but to this musst be added the seven days' bills in circulation; to this amount I add the deposits, forming together their liabilities. Against this, as credits, I have placed the bullion and coin in their coffers—

Dr.		Cr.	
Sept. 14, 1844.			
Notes in circulation ...	£20,788,330	Bullion and coin	£13,589,059
Deposits	12,892,161		
	£33,680,498		£13,589,059
Second period—March 5, 1846.			
Notes in circulation ...	£20,968,242	Bullion and coin	£14,536,305
Deposits	24,943,603		
	45,911,845		£14,536,305
Third period—Nov. 21, 1846.			
Notes in circulation ...	£21,198,429	Bullion and coin	£13,926,772
Deposits	15,851,448		
	£37,049,877		£13,926,772

At the first period they could have paid in money about 7*s.* 6*d.* in the pound; at the second, although they had 1,000,000*l.* more gold, they could only have paid about 6*s.*; at this moment they can pay about 7*s.* One very singular circumstance in their statements is, that the amount of bullion (on which their issues are based, beyond 14,000,000*l.* of notes they are authorized by the new Banking Bill to issue) has remained nearly the same, yet their issues or liabilities have increased upwards of 12,000,000*l.*, and again reduced by 9,000,000*l.*; and a yet more extraordinary circumstance has been that the quantity of notes in circulation has remained very stationary—so that any one merely looking to the bullion and circulation does not perceive that in fact the circumstances of the Bank have really altered very materially, and had the account been kept as formerly, it would have been evident to all parties; in fact, since Sir R. Peel came into power, the liabilities of the Bank have been nearly doubled, and are at this moment about 12,000,000*l.* more than in 1841.

He had detained the House with reading that document, for the purpose of pointing out the fact that, at the first period, the bank could pay 7*s.* 6*d.* in the pound on its liabilities; at the second period, only 6*s.*; and at the last period, only 7*s.* in the pound. Every one who knew the stringent rules by which the Bank of England was bound, would see at once that in order to meet the difficulty occasioned by the railway deposits, the bank had increased the proportion of its liabilities above the amount of its bullion to an extent which was not permitted, and could not be justified, according to the rules by which the bank was bound. If, then, in days of prosperity, in order to further railway enterprise in this country, the bank outstripped the bounds of what was considered prudent, should the House of Commons, in the present misery and distress of Ireland, refuse to adopt no illegitimate course, such as the bank had adopted, in order to relieve railway enterprise in England last spring, but the simple means proposed to them in the measure of the noble Lord? After that example, should they refuse to meet the present emergency with a measure which many of its opponents admitted was wise in its general tendency, and which, he contended, was justified by the occasion? Would they tell him that there was not capital enough in the country to allow them to spare a loan of 4,000,000*l.* annually? Four millions was not a twentieth part of the loans which were raised annually through four successive years of the war, when a revenue of 75,000,000*l.* was raised. Considering the enormous increase of population since that time, would anybody tell him that it was impossible now to raise 4,000,000*l.* annually? Was there any reason to fear an abstraction of capital? Let them look to the income-tax returns. In 1813, an income tax of 10 per cent produced 15,000,000*l.*; an income tax of less than 3 per cent now produced 5,000,000*l.*; in other words, an income tax of 10 per cent would now produce 19,000,000*l.* Were they, then, driven to such a point, that to relieve the distress of their fellow-countrymen, they could not raise less than one-hundredth part of the loans which they had raised when they were at war with half Europe, when the population was much smaller, and when their imports and their exports were not half their present amount? If there were any difficulty, it was not the want of capital. If there were any difficulty—and he believed that there was—it was in our monetary system. That system pressed heavily on the people at all times. When the country was prosperous and trade good, it closed up the internal channels of this country to which capital would otherwise be directed. The speculation in foreign railways, in 1845 and 1846, was a proof of it; and in times of adversity it rendered the stagnation of trade doubly distressing. It locked up the loose capital of the country, and then, when the crisis came, and bullion was exported, it kept the monetary system closed, to perpetuate the difficulty. He asked any one who had attended to the subject, whether it could be deemed wise to leave the banking department of the Bank of England to act on one principle—the principle of private enterprise—whilst the other department was restricted from meeting the necessities of a commercial crisis? In the banking department, the bank now invested its reserves, which were once kept to relieve the temporary, though severe difficulties of the public; but now, when difficulties arose, the Bank of England was in greater embarrassment and distress than most private establishments. He was ashamed of trespassing so long upon the attention of the House, but as we were verging towards a monetary crisis—[Mr. MASTERMAN: No, no.] The hon. Member for the city of London doubted that fact; but he (Mr. Newdegate) could only say, that he spoke on the authority of the late Chancellor of the Exchequer. He rejoiced, however, at the doubt of the hon. Member, because, if there were no such difficulty to be apprehended, then there was no reason against the adoption of the measure of his noble Friend. But perhaps these might be said to be the opinions of a young and inexperienced man; and that was so, but he begged the House to remember that he alone was responsible for the opinions he had expressed. He begged to call the attention of the House to another fact, that in 1839 the drain began on the deposits of the Bank of England; it appeared not improbable that would occur again; and he feared we might again be brought into a similar position to that which followed. But whether that were so or not, he thought that he should have ill discharged his duty as an English Member, if he had not protested against the notion, that in voting for the measure of his noble Friend, he was increasing the taxation of this country, at a time when she was little able to bear it; and still less, if he had sat quiet under the insinuation of the hon. Member for Lanark, that the supporters of the Bill were urging the Government to a disgraceful speculation. The hon. Member for Portsmouth had said, that if the Government had taken the Irish railways into their own hands, from the beginning, as the Governments of some foreign countries had done the railways of their countries, they might have set the good lines against the bad, and made something of them. That might be termed a gambling speculation on the part of Government; but the measure befor the House proposed nothing of the sort: it proposed merely, that Government should advance its credit on loan for the encouragement of the construction of Irish railways by private enterprise; and he hoped that under the opposition of the Government to his noble Friend's measure, there lingered no intention to let railway enterprise in Ireland meet its fate, and then to build up a Government monopoly on the ruins of private capital. He must say that he had been greatly surprised at the manner in which the Government had met the proposal of his noble Friend, which was not offered as a substitute for any of their own measures, but as accessory only. Whatever course they might think right to take upon the present stage of the measure, their hesitation as to allowing it to be read a first time was certainly anything but gracious; and he could not say that they had met the noble Lord in that generous and liberal spirit in which his proposal had been made.

MR. JOHN O'CONNELL confessed that he felt exceeding difficulty as to his vote on this occasion. The project itself, so far as he was competent to judge of it, seemed to have a good deal of doubt about it in its working details; but there was one thing about which there could be no doubt, namely, that it proposed an expenditure of at least 16,000,000*l.*—this in addition to anything the Government had proposed. Now, he was under the deep conviction, that the Government, and the House, and the English public generally, greatly under-estimated the expenditure that would be necessary even for this year to prevent one-fourth, and even one-third, of the Irish population from perishing. He said this with the fullest acknowledgment of the benevolent intentions of the Members of the Government; and he also gladly bore his humble testimony to the strong charitable feelings which prevailed within that House and outside. But that fatal ignorance, which was the inevitable consequence of the want of identification of interests and of real connexion between the British Legislature and the Irish nation, rendered the benevolent intentions of the English public entirely inefficient, and carried dismay into the hearts of those who, like himself, had the means of really knowing the extent of the present exigencies. If he thought that the Government had any plan in reserve by which an expenditure equivalent to that offered by the noble Lord opposite would be insured to Ireland, he would at once follow his own inclinations by giving them his hearty and grateful support; but the Chancellor of the Exchequer had distinctly told them, in his very able speech of the other night, that he was not prepared to undertake so large an expenditure. He (Mr. J. O'Connell) deeply regretted that declaration, while he freely acknowledged, he did not believe that it proceeded from any want of good-will towards Ireland on the part of the right hon. Gentleman or of his Colleagues. If it were the mere difficulties of the plan that deterred him, and the very proper desire to avoid giving the public money for the advantage of private speculators, surely the Government might take up the railway plan themselves. Nothing he had as yet heard convinced him there was any real difficulty in the way. France had not a bad reputation for sharpness in money matters: nay, its financiers were often accused even of penuriousness; yet they had not scrupled to commit themselves to a system of Government railways; and he believed they found their account in it. Not only were there good annual returns, but the railways were beginning to be taken at short leases by private companies; and, on the expiration of those leases the Government would, of course, reap advantages in letting them again. This would have been the plan he (Mr. J. O'Connell) would have proposed; but as this plan was not brought forward, nor any other offering an additional expenditure equivalent to that proposed by the noble Member for Lynn, he was bound, in his strong conviction of the indispensable necessity of such additional expenditure in Ireland, to give his vote to that noble Lord. He regretted much that the right hon. Gentleman the Chancellor of the Exchequer, should have found it necessary, in the course of his very able argument, to deprecate Irish securities for public moneys. He was quite conscious that the right hon. Gentleman did so in no ill spirit towards Ireland, but as a necessity of his case; and further, that he limited his remarks to a few items of advances of public money. But there were so many utterly unfounded impressions on this subject in the minds of the English public, and anything coming from so high a source as the right hon. Gentleman would have such effect in confirming them, that it was absolutely necessary the real state of the case should be made known. It was particularly so, if the Irish Members were to call, as in the discharge of their duty they must call, upon the Ministry and the House, to stretch the expenditure in Ireland much beyond the limits of the Government plans. There were three points to be urged. First, that the advances of money to Ireland were at least as safe as to any other part of the United Kingdom; second, that large advances, even if they were made grants, which he did not ask for, would be no more than due compensation to Ireland for the fiscal injuries inflicted upon her; and, third, that it was as easy of proof as that two and two made four, that if the House at last seriously addressed itself to improve the condition of Ireland, they would, even without one additional tax, be most abundantly repaid by the increased revenue returned from that country. Intending to deal very briefly with these points, he (Mr. J. O'Connell) would upon the first remind the House, that any advances whatever hitherto made to Ireland, were paid out of the produce of the Irish public revenue, and not out of English moneys. There was a Parliamentary return of but two Sessions ago, which gave the comparative amounts since the Union, of remittances of public moneys from the British Exchequer to the Irish, and of remittances from the Irish Exchequer to the British in the same period. The amount sent from the British Exchequer was 7,500,000*l.* The amount sent from the Irish Exchequer was 26,790,000*l.*, showing an excess of Irish moneys sent to the British Exchequer, over those remitted from the latter to the Irish Exchequer, of 19,290,000*l.* Now, he would go into a few, and a very few, particulars. The right hon. Gentleman had laid great stress on the non-repayment of the Dublin Wide Streets Loan to an amount a good deal under 300,000*l.* What were the facts as to that loan? A portion of it—certainly a small portion—had been repaid when the right hon. Baronet the Member for Tamworth, being at the time Secretary for Ireland, declared in that House that the entire sum would be no more than a small compensation to Dublin for the loss of a resident Parliament, and consequently of the rich resident gentry. Of course, such a declaration must have decided the fate of such an advance of money, even if the attempt to recover it had been persevered in. Then there was the Lagan Canal. Why, as he understood, the proprietors of the canal were English; but whether that were so or not, the moneys came out of the grant of 500,000*l.* of the Irish Parliament for the purpose of improving the internal communications of Ireland. Then the right hon. Gentleman spoke of moneys to Cork and to Limerick. The amount to Cork was very small; and whatever it was, it did not equal the promises made at the Union, when, amongst other things, the citizens of Cork were assured that they should have an extensive naval establishment permanently in their harbour. As to Limerick, if the same precaution had been taken as was taken with regard to other places, there would have been a return of the moneys; but he should again recall to the House, that whatever advances had been made there or elsewhere in Ireland, the moneys came, as he had shown, out of the Irish, and not out of the English, revenue. Again, were the House at all aware—and he believed that their ignorance on Irish matters was such that they were not aware—that there was a considerable proportion of revenue paid by Ireland for which she got no credit whatever? For instance, in the statement of the revenue of Crown lands, in the public accounts, the annual 60,000*l.* or 70,000*l.* of the Irish quit and Crown rents was lumped in with the English account, and no credit at all given for it to Ireland. Again, on manufactures imported for Irish consumption from England, the duties, whether of revenue or of excise, were credited to the English revenue; although, of course, paid by the Irish customer. Altogether, he could, if he had time, easily show that half a million was a moderate estimate of the uncredited revenue of Ireland; a sum that would far more than cover the utmost statements of Irish deficiencies, as to repayment of advances, that could possibly be made. Now, there was a short statement in figures which he would submit to the House, as to advances and repayments to and by Great Britain and Ireland, respectively, which he trusted would go far to give right ideas upon the subject:—

Ireland.	Advances.	Repayments.
	£.	£.
Post and other roads and bridges . . .	744,860	721,200
Police, old and new .	3,600,000	3,400;000
Boards and officers of health, cholera, and fever	236,000	228,000
Lunatic Asylums . .	672,000	616,000
Money advances to England up to 1842	15,661,385	6,200,000
Advances to Ireland—see Financial Accounts	9,067,170	7,050,000

Profit to the Government on Irish advances:—
Upon one million, in 1843–4 ... £ 47,434
Ditto, ditto in 1844–5 .., 51,720*

These statements were taken from the finance accounts, but all from Parliamentary returns; and the House would see, by reference to those accounts, that Ireland was steadily repaying many matters in which she could of right claim that the empire should bear the expense. In particular, he alluded to the expenses on post-roads, bridges, &c., on which, out of upwards of 700,000*l.*, there was but 24,000*l.* yet due; and on the enormous expense of constabulary, which did duty for, and saved the expense of, a large amount of the regular army in Ireland, there were out of 3,600,000*l.* but 200,000*l.* yet unpaid. He had also shown that England, up to 1842, had repaid but 6,000,000*l.* out of 15,000,000*l.* advanced to public works, while Ireland repaid 7,000,000*l.* out of 9,000,000*l.*; and further, that by reason of higher rates of interest charged to Ireland by the Government on moneys lent to her than those at which the Government raised the moneys themselves, they had realized a profit of 50,000*l.* There were other matters which he would not delay upon; but one he could not pass without drawing attention to it. The Scotch fisheries had 1,400,000*l.* spent upon them in thirty-six years; while in forty-five years there had been only 300,000*l.* spent upon the Irish. And it was a curious fact, that, annually, 11,000*l.* were still paid by England to Scotland on account of what was called the Scottish equivalent, namely, moneys voted at the time of the Scotch Union, in 1707, as a compensation to Scotland for becoming subject to the English debt. The hon. Member for Coventry had, the other night, taunted Ireland with not having paid the workhouse loan; but he seemed not to know that it was in process of repayment, and that England owed under a similar head 900,000*l.* Now, as to the second point, namely, that a large expenditure in Ireland would be no more than some compensation to her for the effects of the Union, he should remind the House, that in money matters, as in some others, the provisions of the Union had been grossly violated towards that country. There was much stress laid the other day in negotiations with France upon a treaty of a century and a half ago. He would call upon them to respect what they declared to be a treaty between Great Britain and Ireland, not yet fifty years date. By the provisions of that treaty—as they had, when it suited their advantage, insisted upon calling it, and, therefore, could not now repudiate the designation—the unfairness of making Ireland liable for the enormous debt of Great Britain was acknowledged, and also the impossibility of giving her, as in the case of Scotland, an adequate equivalent, it was therefore provided that it should not be competent—and he begged the House to mark the word—that it should not be competent to the United Parliament to make Ireland liable to the heavy debt of England, except upon the occurrence of two contingencies of equal necessity and importance. But Ireland was so made liable in 1816, when it was even declared, in the very Parliament that made her so liable, that one of those indispensable contingencies had not occurred; nay, that the very contrary was the case. This was not the time to go into particulars; but he was ready to give them, and to prove every word that he said from Parliamentary records. He would only now say, that the consequence of the violation of the Union Act was, that England had thrown upon the taxes which were common to both countries, a large portion of the burdens which, according to the Union Treaty, as it was called, she should have defrayed by separate taxes. To illustrate this, he would direct attention to the separate taxation of Great Britain at this moment. It exceeded only by a little the sum of 12,000,000*l.*, while the annual charge upon her debt, contracted before the Union, was 17,000,000*l.*; deducting a sum equivalent to the annual charge upon her debt contracted before the Union, that left a clear sum of 4,000,000*l.*, which, at the present day, was unjustly charged, on account of the English debt before the Union, upon the common debt of taxation. During the course of forty-six years, the amount thrown thus unfairly on the taxation common to both countries, gave a proportion for Ireland of 60,000,000*l.*—without counting interest or compound interest—the benefit of which she should have had in relief of taxation, had England paid by separate taxation all that was rightfully due from her on that score. Whether these conclusions should be disputed, or not, the following statement of the relief of taxation out of the imposition of taxation on each country, respectively, since the Union, were to be found in Parliamentary returns, accessible to every Member up-stairs after five minutes' search:—

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* Appendix to Lord Devon's Report.

GENERAL TAXATION, RELIEF, AND IMPOSITION.

Taxation, &c.	Great Britain.	Ireland.
	£.	£.
Relief of taxation .	47,100,000	2,670,000
Imposition of ditto .	40,620,000	5,510,300
Excess of relief to England over taxes imposed	6,480,000	—
Excess to Ireland of taxes imposed . .	—	2,830,000
Assessed taxes (Ireland) reduced and repealed	—	536,090
Ditto (England) . .	5,179,202	—

The assessed taxes, he should remark, were, in 1815, declared by the Finance Committee of that year, to be as nearly as possible assimilated to those of Great Britain. He would not delay the House long with the third point, namely, that Ireland, if her condition were improved, would speedily repay a large expenditure. The customs, stamps, and Post-office duties were the same in Ireland as in England, in so far as the rates; yet the British receipts were 27,000,000*l.*, while the Irish were not 3,000,000*l.* Population was as eighteen to eight. The eight millions of Irish would, if their condition were raised, consume taxed articles under these heads to the amount of 12,000,000*l.*, that is to say, an income of 9,000,000*l.*; and similarly on the items on which excise duties are equal in both countries, the Irish increase would be 3,000,000*l.*, making a total increase of revenue of more than 12,000,000*l.*; to say nothing of what might be got from an extension of the income and assessed taxes of Ireland. when her condition would be so improved; but were the income and assessed taxes now extended to her while in her present poverty, the effect would only be to cripple the receipts on the duties of customs and excise. Now, without going into more details, he believed he had said enough to show that it would be perfectly safe to make a large expenditure in Ireland, far beyond even the plan of the noble Lord, provided that the House also addressed itself to its duty, too long neglected, of at least opening up the resources of prosperity in Ireland. He frankly confessed, however, that he did not think that House, or any legislature save one resident in Ireland, could fully call out the great capabilities of that country: nothing but a resident legislature would bring home, and make stay at home, the rich absentees, and thus give custom, and the support of capital circulating at home, to the present scarcely existing manufacturing interests of Ireland. Without manufactures in that country, it was quite impossible to take the pressure off the land—impossible to prevent subdivisions of holdings and incitements to the landlord's cupidity or to his necessities. Without the residence of rich proprietors, and the stoppage thereby of the millions of rent-drain from Ireland, capital never could increase nor healthily circulate in that country. At present, what capital did remain in Ireland was in a great measure locked up in the funds, and savings' banks, and small building investments; there being no prosperous home-market to stimulate investments in large manufacturing enterprises. That House would find the necessity pressed daily more and more on them of sending back the Irish proprietors to their own country by the increase of the distress. The policy which Mr. Fox so early denounced—the policy of the Union Act—would soon be denounced by the whole English community as it was by the Irish. Hon. Members at his side of the House would respect the opinions of Mr. Fox, and he therefore would read a short extract of that statesman's denunciation. Mr. Fox said—

> "The whole scheme (Union) went upon that false and abominable presumption, that we could legislate better for the Irish, than they could do for themselves—a principle founded upon the most arrogant despotism and tyranny. There was not a more clear axiom in the science of politics, than that man was his own natural governor, and that he ought to legislate for himself. No other being could enter into his feelings, or have anything common in sympathy with his nature; and therefore the legislature of a people must flow out of, and be identified with, the people themselves. It was idle to speak of the word union to Ireland, since there could be no such thing as a real union on an equal footing, between countries so disproportionate and unequal. We ought not to presume to legislate for a nation, in whose feelings and affections, wants and interests, opinions and prejudices, we have no sympathy. It can only be attempted on the principle of the most arrogant despotism. It was an attack on the pride of a gallant nation, and was calculated to reduce them to the state of a dependent province; and it was, in his opinion, a most audacious attempt, after all that appeared in that country, since it was adding insult to injury, to call it a measure in which the Irish acquiesced."

He (Mr. J. O'Connell) recommended these words to the serious consideration of the English Members; and would ask them if Mr. Fox's words had not come true, and that Ireland was indeed reduced to the state of a miserable mendicant dependency. The disastrous experiment had been made in full; and its ruinous consequences to Ireland were now fully developed. The Union had been tried for forty-six years; and the result was the misery they were now labouring to meet and partially to remedy. There could be no real, no efficient remedy, so long as the natural sources of prosperity were sealed and closed up. Let the House restore her Parliament to Ireland; and those sources would speedily be opened, and Ireland would arise from her present miserable helplessness, and give new strength, and vigour, and vitality to the empire. The hon. Member concluded by thanking the House for their attention.

Mr. CORRY said, that he did not rise for the purpose of replying to the two hon. Gentlemen who had spoken last, whose observations did not appear to him to be very relevant to the subject before the

House; but, as an Irish Member, he was anxious to state, very shortly, the reasons for the vote which he should feel it his duty to give on the second reading of the Bill. He might, perhaps, in the first instance, be permitted to say, that when he received the circular—a copy of which had, he believed, been forwarded to the whole of the Irish representatives, inviting them to belong to the Irish party then about to be formed — he stated, in reply, that, although he must decline to attach himself to a party of whose objects and principles he had no means of forming an opinion, he should, nevertheless, consider it his duty to discard all political prejudice from his mind in dealing with whatever measures might be proposed for the relief of Ireland during the present Session, and to co-operate with the Irish party, whatever its political complexion might be — whenever the course pursued by it should appear to him to be conducive to the interests of Ireland, and generally deserving of support. It was, he could assure his noble Friend the Member for Lynn, in this spirit only—he meant, in a spirit wholly divested of the prejudices of party—that he had endeavoured to approach the consideration of the great measure which had been proposed by him, he was sure, in perfect sincerity, for the immediate relief and prospective improvement of Ireland. He was quite prepared to concur with his noble Friend in thinking that the extension of railroads in Ireland —although he did not take so sanguine a view of its effects, either immediate or prospective — would, nevertheless, materially tend to the improvement of the country; but it did not therefore follow, that, on a comprehensive view of the whole question, he should approve of the means by which his noble Friend had proposed to accomplish an object, which, in itself, he admitted to be desirable, or that he should consider those means as well adapted to the relief of the distress then unhappily prevailing in Ireland. The urgent and immediate difficulty with which the House had now to grapple, was that of providing food for a starving population, whose ordinary means of subsistence had been swept away by a direful visitation of Providence. It was the duty of the Government, at a season of such extreme peril to the lives of millions of the people, regardless of all ordinary considerations of financial expediency, to contribute the resources of the State in assisting the property of Ireland, which—in the part of Ireland, at least, with which he was connected—had not, he thought, been neglectful of its duties; but which, unassisted, was, in so overwhelming a calamity, wholly unequal to the task, in arresting, as far as human means could arrest it, the progress of the famine which was spreading through the land. This duty Her Majesty's Ministers had not hesitated to perform. His noble Friend the Member for Stamford had said, that there must be something wrong in the financial system of the country if they could not afford to advance 4,000,000*l.* for the relief of Ireland; but the fact was, that Ministers had already proposed measures for the relief of Ireland, the cost of which had been estimated, including the expenditure already incurred, at 9,000,000*l.*; and it was in addition to this — for he thought he had never heard a proposition more untenable than that his noble Friend's plan would supersede the necessity of any one of the measures of relief which had been proposed by the Government—that they were called on to advance 4,000,000*l.* in this year, and in each of the three next succeeding years, for the construction of railroads in Ireland; and although his noble Friend anticipated that the whole of this money would ultimately be repaid—in the first instance, at least, the Chancellor of the Exchequer would be required to raise it, and so far the transaction would add to the financial difficulties with which, in the present state of the country, it was obvious the Government would have to contend; and he would remind the House that the estimate of the sums which the Government would be required to contribute for providing the people of Ireland with food, had been brought down only to August next; but would any man venture to predict that the distress in Ireland would cease with the collection of the ensuing harvest? He wished that he could take so favourable a view of the prospects of Ireland; but when he considered the scarcity of seed—the backwardness on the part of the people in many districts in attending to the cultivation of the soil—and the doubts, to say the least of it, which must be entertained lest the potato disease should not yet have exhausted itself—he confessed that he could not look forward without the apprehension of great scarcity and great distress in Ireland, even after the expiration of the period to which the Government had brought down the estimate of the probable cost of the measures which they had proposed. Now, if that were the prospect before them, surely, if money was to be sent into Ireland, it would be more prudent to husband the resources of the State to meet, if necessary, the contingency which he thought they had so much reason to dread, instead of investing so large a sum as 16,000,000*l.* in works which, however useful in themselves, had, he thought, been very properly considered as inapplicable to the relief of distress arising from scarcity of food; because, whatever might be the proportion of the whole of their cost which might be applied to the payment of labour, by far the larger portion of it would of necessity be required for other purposes. His noble Friend himself did not anticipate that his proposed advance of 4,000,000*l.* would give employment to many more than 100,000 persons —an estimate which the Chancellor of the Exchequer (speaking, probably, on as good authority) had considered to be greatly exaggerated; but he (Mr. Corry) did not think the difference between the two estimates to be of as much importance as might at first sight appear, because the formation of the groundworks of railroads was an operation of so laborious a character, that he agreed with those who were of opinion that the half-starved peasantry of Ireland would, in their present condition, be found to be wholly unequal to it, and that the contractors could soon be compelled, in their own defence, to substitute for them, in large numbers, the hardy and well-fed class of men who were usually employed in the execution of such works in this country. The letter written by Colonel Jones on the 19th of last month, which was read to the House by the noble Lord at the head of the Government, in his speech on introducing the measures which he proposed for the relief of Ireland, was strongly confirmatory of that view of the case. Colonel Jones was reported to have said—

> "I am of opinion that it would be better in many cases to give food than to be paying away money as we are now obliged to do at the same time that the people are discontented at the small sums they are entitled to. The fact is, the system of task-work is no longer beneficial employment to many —their bodily strength is gone, and their spirits depressed, and they have not power to exert themselves sufficiently to earn an ordinary day's wages."

It was true that this observation might be said to apply to those districts only in which the greatest amount of destitution prevailed; but he would remind the House that these were the very districts which had the strongest claim on their sympathy and support; and if it were argued that labourers better fed and equal to the work, could be drawn from other districts in Ireland, his answer would be, that such persons could not be fit objects for relief, and therefore that his noble Friend's expedient would contribute in a very small degree to the accomplishment of the immediate object which he had in view in proposing it. And even if it should have the effect of affording employment to those who were now suffering from extreme destitution in Ireland, to the full extent which he had calculated, and of providing 550,000 labourers and their dependants with a better description of food than they had heretofore been accustomed to; he confessed that he very much doubted whether, as strong stimulants when applied to the human frame were sure to leave weakness behind, so, in like manner, a reaction would not follow in the withdrawal of the artificial means by which it was proposed to free the industrial energies of Ireland during a period of four years; which would eventually lead to much suffering among the people. There appeared to him to be various other objections to the scheme, on which he did not think it necessary to dwell; not because he did not attach the greatest importance to them, but because they had already been urged by others more competent than he was fully to estimate their force: such as the financial difficulties which they had been told by the Ministers of the Crown it would occasion—the unfair advantages which it would give to the holders of one description of railway scrip over those of another—the doubts which existed whether the whole of the railways which would be undertaken would prosper sufficiently to enable the companies to fulfil their engagements with the Government—and other such objections, which led him to the conclusion, that it was his duty to vote against the measure. He had arrived at this conclusion, however, with regret, because no one could be more sensible than he was of the advantages which would result from the extension of railways in Ireland; and it would give him great satisfaction if the Government could devise some means which would not be open to the objections to which he considered the present proposal to be obnoxious, for the promotion of railway enterprise in Ireland; but he could not concur in the means by which his noble Friend proposed to effect that object, for the reasons which he had stated, which were shortly these: that he considered them unjust to important interests in this country, and ill-adapted as a means of present relief to the people of Ireland. He thought, also, that the moral effect of his noble Friend's plan would be bad. They were already too much disposed, in Ireland, to look to assistance from this country, instead of trusting to their own exertions, whenever any great enterprise was to be undertaken; and he thought that the almost extravagant amount of assistance which his noble Friend proposed to give them, would tend to encourage that spirit of dependence on the aid of Government, which had, he was convinced, done as much to depress the material interests of Ireland, as the bold efforts of private enterprise had done to raise this country to her state of prosperity and greatness. He knew there was something dazzling to many in the prospect of introducing so much English capital into Ireland; but he trusted the representatives of Ireland would not allow themselves to be led away by such a consideration, but that they would remember that they were bound to take a comprehensive view of the whole question, and to consider it in all its bearings, before they determined on giving it their support. He was sure that even as regarded the interests of Ireland herself, at a time when she had so much need of the sympathy and support of this country, no more unfortunate impression could get abroad, than that the Irish Members were banded together to support whatever measures might be proposed—without reference to their aptitude—without reference to their justice—provided only they should have for their object the introduction of English capital into Ireland. He did not for a moment mean to insinuate that any Irish Member would allow himself to be unduly influenced by such a consideration; but for himself, considering, as he did, that his noble Friend's proposal was, in principle, unjust to this country, which had evinced so much readiness to relieve the distress of Ireland, and that it was not well adapted to the relief of that distress, but that a far larger portion of the money proposed to be advanced would find its way into the hands of railway speculators, than into those of the starving Irish, he felt that no alternative was left to him, in the conscientious discharge of his duty, but to give his support to those who were constitutionally responsible for the application of the finances of the country, in resisting the second reading of the Bill.

SIR WILLIAM CLAY did not intend to vote for the second reading of the Bill. He thought there were objections to the details of the noble Lord's plan. If the principle were admitted that there was sufficient cause for the lending of the money by the Government to railway companies, he did not think that so large a proportion as two-thirds need be advanced. Again, he could not approve of the noble Lord's suggestion, of advancing the money at an interest of three and a half per cent, when the ordinary market interest given upon money so advanced was much higher. Yet still he thought that the question of assistance to railway companies in Ireland, to be given by the Government under other conditions than were proposed by the noble Lord, was one well worthy the consideration of the House. He did not think much of the validity of the objections which had been made to the measure. It was said to be opposed to the principles of political economy. He could not admit that much weight should be attached to that objection. Assistance to be given by Government to railway enterprise was certainly not more opposed to the principles of political economy, than other plans even now before Parliament for the relief of Ireland: the Bill for the reclamation of waste lands, for instance. Again, it was said to be both inexpedient and unjust to divert capital from its legitimate and natural channels. But he did not think it was diverting the capital of the country from its legitimate and natural channels, to send it from England into Ireland. He believed that what was chiefly wanted in England was field for the employment of capital; and as there were reasons connected with the social and political condition of Ireland, which operated to deter capital from flowing into that country, quite irrespective of the ordinary motives and inducements by which the possessors of capital were influenced, he thought it would be wise, by the intervention of the Government, to neutralize and obviate the effects of those circumstances in the condition of Ireland. Then it was said that the measure would be an encouragement to speculation. Now he would not have the House legislate for the encouragement of speculation. But he could not think it a sufficient reason to weigh against a line of policy otherwise beneficial, that its effects would be to encourage speculation. Such an objection would apply equally to every measure of finance which affected taxation of commodities. There was no tax either freshly put on or taken off which did not encourage speculation in one way or another. Another objection which had been raised by his right hon. Friend near him (the Chancellor of the Exchequer) was, that by a measure now to encourage railway speculation in Ireland, they were inverting the natural order of events — that railways should follow the extension of commerce in a country—that they had done so in England; but the noble Lord and his supporters wanted to make railways precede in Ireland that extension of commerce which they had only followed in England. He begged the House to recollect that the formation of railways actually created, and that uniformly, a large increase of commerce. He need only ask any hon. Gentleman who had served upon Railway Committees (and there were few Members in that House who had not served upon some one or more of them), to recollect how the traffick tables were usually made out. In the first place, the traffick takers estimated that a great number of passengers would travel by the line, assuming a certain large increase upon the number who travelled by the road; and their estimate was generally borne out by the results. But when they estimated the goods traffick, although they had perhaps made their calculations over a route where only one solitary carrier passed the road daily, they set down the traffick at thousands of tons in the week; and the reasons they gave all tended to show the enormous extent to which the facilities of communication afforded by railways, created traffic. They showed that while lime was in abundance on one part of the intended line, there were vast tracks of country which would be benefited by its application on another part—that facilities existed for making drain tiles in one district, which would greatly increase the value of some other district on the line. Such was the nature of their calculations, which experience had almost invariably shown to be justified by the results. It was, therefore, not fair to judge of the necessity for a railway, nor to treat the question of railway extension by the actual amount of business existing in the district, because it had been proved that the making of railways did in a very high degree create a traffick, and open up the resources of a country. Upon the subject of the actual amount of employment which the earthworks would afford, he thought that justice hardly had been done to the fact that these earthworks must give very considerable employment; but he wished the House would not confine itself to the mere consideration of the amount of relief to be temporarily given by such works. It was the future of Ireland which they ought to look to. It was the future of Ireland which appalled him far more than the present. They had before them in Ireland the spectacle of a people in a condition more resembling that of the ryots of India, than of a civilized population of a European country in the nineteenth century. They had a people in an elementary state of human society, in the lowest condition of civilization, and it was their business to alter and to remedy such a state. It was their duty so to legislate as to allow capital to find a field of action in that country, and to give an impulse to employment. They ought to open up the resources of the country, and to afford an opportunity for the investment of capital in mines and manufactures; and he thought that much could be done in that direction by the extension of a system of railways. He therefore repeated that he thought the subject of railway extension in Ireland well worthy the consideration of the House. He thought that the mode of carrying it into effect should be left in the hands of the Government, and that, care being taken in the examination into the several plans proposed by the companies, the Government having selected those likely to be most useful, should go on *pari passu* with them, and advance equal proportions of money with those raised by the companies themselves. He was of opinion that such an amount could be advanced without risk.

Mr. SHAW said, that, as he did not mean to join in the general debate, he would ask the House to permit him to take that opportunity of saying a few words in explanation of his own vote. The fact was, that in respect of the question then before them, his feelings would lead him one way, while his reason and judgment constrained him to vote the other. No man disliked more than he did even the appearance of a wavering or doubtful course, and he trusted it was not one he was in the habit of taking; but in all the important affairs of life, as well as in politics, they could not shut their eyes to, but must be influenced by a due consideration of the practical consequences of their acts. He agreed with the hon. Baronet who had just sat down (Sir W. Clay), in much of what he had said on the plan of Irish railways. He (Mr. Shaw) had always approved of a general and combined system of railways for Ireland under the charge and control of the Government; and he hoped that the Government would yet introduce some measure upon that principle, removing such defects and correcting such errors as the Chancellor of the Exchequer had deprecated in regard to the present Bill; and perhaps adopting some of the suggestions of the hon. Gentleman opposite, so conversant with the subject, who had spoken for the first time in that debate (Mr. Chaplin); for example, undertaking the earthworks on some of the trunk lines in the way most calculated to give employment and relief to the distressed poor; and, after that, leasing the lines to railway companies. But considering the declaration made by the noble Lord (Lord J. Russell) and by the Chancellor of the Exchequer, of what would be the practical result of the success of the Motion then before the House as regarded the Ministry; and the reply of his noble Friend (Lord G. Bentinck) that he (Lord G. Bentinck) would not shrink from the responsibilities that it would involve; he (Mr. Shaw) confessed that seeing the disjointed and disabled state of parties in that House—that the financial and general aspect of public affairs was such as must fill the firmest mind with anxious care; and, above all, looking to the present calamitous condition of Ireland, he could not be a party to overthrowing the existing Government at such a crisis: still less to attempting to form a new one upon such a question as that then before them. It might be, that he should be sufficiently safe in following the bent of his own inclination, inasmuch as that the Government was then in no great danger of defeat; but after what he had already said, and indeed, on any question of grave importance, he felt that the more manly and straightforward way was to vote as if the question was to be decided by that vote alone. He was aware that he should subject himself to unpopularity in Ireland by not voting at all risks for so tempting a scheme as that proposed by his noble Friend (Lord G. Bentinck). Still, he (Mr. Shaw) could not think it would be for the true interests of Ireland to attempt to force upon the Government, and that country, a large additional pecuniary obligation at that period of monetary embarrassment; and when it must in justice be admitted they were making great and munificent efforts on behalf of the suffering people of Ireland. He could not, as an Irishman, sufficiently express to his noble Friend (Lord G. Bentinck) his (Mr. Shaw's) sense of his noble Friend's exertions; of the care, the attention, the ability, and still more the deep sympathy, he had evinced towards Ireland in the present trying exigency. But his noble Friend would excuse him for saying, notwithstanding his noble Friend's confident announcement of his readiness to accept office—and no one could doubt his noble Friend's unflinching courage—the independent party that surrounded his noble Friend could never forget that he (Lord G. Bentinck) had stood by them in their utmost need—had redeemed the character and consistency of the country gentlemen of England, when their natural leaders had forsaken them—and animated them with the spirit, the purpose, and the power to place the exemplary mark of public disapprobation upon the exhibition of unexampled public and political inconsistency. Still his noble Friend (Lord G. Bentinck) would excuse him for saying, that he (Mr. Shaw) was persuaded it would be more conducive, not only to his noble Friend's personal comfort and happiness, but to his political reputation, that he should fail rather than succeed in displacing Her Majesty's Ministers at that moment. At all events, he (Mr. Shaw) could find no room to doubt what was his own duty under the circumstances he had stated —and that was to vote, though reluctantly, against the second reading of the Bill.

Sir W. MOLESWORTH: The hon. Gentleman the Member for Kilkenny, in the commencement of his speech, expressed his opinion as to the policy which ought to be pursued towards Ireland in the present emergency. His opinion might be stated in a very few words. It was simply this: Let there be the greatest possible expenditure. Such was the language of the hon. Gentleman, and other hon. Members from Ireland. I do not mean to say anything disrespectful to those hon. Gentlemen. I pity them from my heart. For neither words can tell, nor imagination conceive, the suffering they have beheld—the horrors that have surrounded them—famine and pestilence at their doors—death in its most hideous forms before their eyes—and, worse than death, the agony of impending starvation—the agony of men witnessing, without being able to relieve, the lingering tortures of those dearest to them—these sights have been familiar to many of the Irish Members; and I am not surprised that some of them should be half wild with grief and apprehension, and, like the plague-stricken, should be eager to try every nostrum which contains the promise of a cure. But the representatives of England, whose feelings are not harrowed up in a similar manner, are able and are bound to exercise a cooler and a calmer judgment. They are willing—the people of England are willing—to make any pecuniary sacrifice to save their Irish fellow-citizens from starvation. This has been already proved. A Bill has passed this House for the relief of the destitute poor of Ireland. I cannot say that I cordially approved of that measure; but I felt as other Members felt, that when thousands were dying—when myriads would perish if unassisted—when there was not a moment to spare—it was impossible to scan strictly the measure of a Ministry who were responsible for the lives of a people, and who introduced that measure as one of urgent necessity. Enormous will be the expense of that measure. Great will be the burden which the patient and laborious people of this country will have to bear for Ireland. Yet I believe that the people will not be displeased with their representatives for having placed that burden on their shoulders, in order to save the lives of their fellow-citizens. They will expect, however, that having done thus much, we should calmly consider what can be done to prevent the recurrence of a similar calamity, and what ought to be done in order to place for the future the burden of Irish distress on the shoulders of those persons who ought to bear it. I object to the scheme of the noble Lord, because it will not accomplish either of these objects. I object to the scheme of the noble Lord, because, viewing it in the most favourable manner, it will only accomplish in a slight degree and at an enormous expense the object of the noble Lord, which is to provide employment for the destitute poor of Ireland. For it has been shown that of the 16,000,000*l.* which the noble Lord proposes to expend on Irish railways, not more than one-half, probably less than one-third, would be expended in paying the wages of labour; that the labourers who would be employed would be chiefly able-bodied men, skilled in that description of labour which is required for making railroads; and, therefore, that in all probability a considerable portion of them would be imported from this country. It has been proved likewise that the increased demand for labour, which is caused by making a railway, seldom extends very much beyond the immediate neighbourhood of the railway. Now most of the Irish railways are on the eastern side of the country, where there is most wealth and least destitution, consequently the demand for labour would be increased in those districts where it was the least necessary to increase it; and even then it would not be the really destitute, the needy, and the suffering, who would obtain employment, but the strong, the able-bodied men, who can always obtain employment, if willing to work. In addition to this, it appears, from the evidence of the persons best acquainted with Ireland, that if labourers were to be brought from a different part of the country to work upon a railway, the immediate consequence would be riots and faction fights with the surrounding population; and ultimately, in all probability, the labourers from a distance would be driven away. For these reasons I consider that the scheme of the noble Lord would only be of benefit to that portion of the labouring population of Ireland who are in the immediate vicinity of a railroad, and who, I believe, least require assistance; and the benefit to them would be trifling beyond all comparison with the enormous expenditure of public money which would be required. The persons who would be the chief gainers by this scheme of the noble Lord would be the landowners, whose property would be traversed by railroads, and who would get a good price for their land; the shareholders, whose now valueless shares would, if we believe the noble Lord, become more profitable than the best English securities; and the mortgagees on railways, whose mortgages are, according to the Bill of the noble Lord, to be the first charge on those moneys which he proposes to levy from the English people, on the plea of giving employment to the destitute poor of Ireland. Indeed, looking at the clauses of this Bill, I think the Chancellor of the Exchequer has justly characterized or rather stigmatized it as a Bill for the relief of destitute shareholders and mortgagees. Now, Sir, I believe that the people of England will consent to make great pecuniary sacrifices for the relief of destitution in Ireland; but they will justly condemn us, if under the plea of charity we give away their money to railway speculators. I say, if we give away their money, for it is ridiculous to suppose that more than a very inconsiderable portion of such loans would be repaid—for past experience shows that loans to private companies in Ireland are rarely, if ever, repaid. Why should it be different with railways? What security can they give us? It is evident that if any railroads are likely to repay the loans of money which it is proposed to make to them, it will be those whose intrinsic merits are the greatest, and which, therefore, least require extrinsic aid. It will be those which pass through the wealthiest portion of the country, where there is, or ought to be, the least destitution and want; and where, therefore, assistance from England should be least required and least given. On the other hand, the railroads which will be most certain not to repay any loan that may be made to them, will be those which pass through the poorest portion of the country, where, however, there is most destitution and distress, and consequently where assistance is most required. With regard to these railroads, the simplest and most economical plan would be to dispense with the rails and other materials, which constitute more than one-half the expense of making a railway. In either case it appears to me that the plan of the noble Lord would be a failure. For in the case of really good railways, loans would hardly be required; and I have assigned my reasons for believing that little relief would be given by them to the destitute poor. On the other hand, in the case of bad railways, it is true much more relief would be given to the destitute poor, but it would be at an enormous disproportionate cost, for the loans would never be repaid. Now, where are we to get the money to be advanced to the Irish railroad proprietors? A public loan would be required; the consequence of raising such a loan would be the depreciation of all public and private securities, and by this all British undertakings would suffer. Now, I ask hon. Members, representatives of English counties, to consider that in every county in England important railways are making, or are about to be made; that most of them will pass through towns of much importance, with great local trade; that their object, generally speaking, is not to create a future and problematic traffic, but to facilitate a traffic already existing; that they are certain to be beneficial to the country, and to augment its wealth. In order to make these railroads, neither loans nor favours are required from the Government. The merits of the schemes themselves are sufficient to command the capital which is required to make them, provided that capital is not forced into other employments by the interference of the Legislature. But if the Legislature furnish Irish railroad proprietors with the money which the merits of their schemes do not enable them to obtain by fair competition in the money market, by so doing the Legislature would diminish the fund which would otherwise be applied to making railroads in England and elsewhere. In short, every farthing which the Legislature squanders upon bad railroads in Ireland, is so much money deducted from good railroads in other parts of the empire, and by so much, therefore, is the wealth of the empire diminished. Now, I ask hon. Gentlemen, especially those who are Members of that party which the noble Lord so emphatically calls his own, and whom he describes as rushing here with eager haste from every part of Great Britain and Europe to obey his commands and do his bidding—let them, as independent English Gentlemen, who should scorn blindly to follow any man, exercise their own judgment, and remember that, though we are bound to save Ireland from famine, we are equally bound to do justice to our own constituents, and not idly squander away their money in such vain and noxious projects. In the papers which have been laid upon the Table of the House, and in the descriptions which have been given of the distress in Ireland, and of the means which have been taken to relieve it, many facts are stated, which when I read them astonished me excessively. First, I was surprised at the want of energy and of self-reliance on the part of many of those persons whose duty it was to have prepared against the impending distress. In many cases it seemed that their first and only thought was to apply to the Government of the country, to beg its assistance, and to entreat it to feed and clothe the people; and only after repeated refusals and even menaces could they be induced to do their duty, to exert themselves, to make rates, and to attempt to collect them. Now with regard to the payment of those rates, I was equally surprised to find that the defaulters were not so much among the poorer classes as among the immediate lessors, that is, among the owners of landed property, who are described as persons perfectly able to pay their rates if they chose to do so. And lastly, Sir, I was astonished by a description of an abundant harvest—fields covered with oats and corn—and yet to read that there was no food for the people. These striking facts seem to me to indicate what is the first permanent measure which is required for Ireland. It should be a stringent poor law, which shall compel the real owner of the soil and the possessor of property in Ireland, to support the destitute poor. This is not a fitting occasion to discuss the question of a poor law for Ireland. I shall therefore conclude with expressing my opinion, that before this question is entertained, whether money should be lent or not to Irish landlords or shareholders, the subject of a poor law for Ireland should be carefully discussed, and an adequate measure should be passed for the permanent relief of the destitute poor of that country.

Mr. DISRAELI: Sir, when I first, in the early part of the debate, attempted to catch your eye, I was in hopes I might have addressed himself, without reserve, to the immediate subject which is before us for consideration. I should not have attempted, like some speakers, perhaps, on either side of the House, to diverge into topics, no doubt of paramount importance, but, under the existing circumstances, not I think, of urgent interest. But, after the short, yet impressive address of my right hon. Friend the Recorder for Dublin (Mr. Shaw), I think the House will hardly deem it impertinent on my part if I advert to the feelings which influenced that expression from him, and to the position in which they are placed. The right hon. Gentleman has expressed, with a frankness which becomes him, and with a good feeling for which all his friends must give him credit, the sentiment under which he felt it his duty to give a vote contrary to his economical convictions; but in pursuance of the policy which he has adopted, the right hon. Gentleman tells us that he believes—at least, that it has been avowed—that the fate of the Government depends on the vote which the House could now give; and because the fate of the Government is dependent on that vote, he must register his suffrage contrary to the proposition which the noble Lord the Member for Lynn has brought forward for our acceptance. This leads one, no doubt, to the consideration of circumstances other than those which could influence us in a mere vote upon the question before us. I can easily understand why party connexion should not only induce, but should authorize, an individual Member to vote against a measure which he considers abstractedly beneficial to the country, if he thought it were an instrument which would open to what he considered an obnoxious party the road to power, and enable them to supplant his Friends, knowing that they would follow on every other question a policy hostile to that which his party pursued, and, in his mind, antagonistic to the general interests of the country. But that is not the position of my right hon. Friend. He still is, and I hope will remain, one of that political connexion who—being originally deserted by their leader, and even now fighting against odds — most unexpectedly find themselves in a position adverse to the existing Government. And this leads me to the consideration of the circumstances in which we find ourselves, and the position we now occupy. Sir, this measure that has been announced to the House by the noble Lord the Member for Lynn suggested itself to him some time ago, and was long matured and well digested. He considered it to be a measure peculiarly adapted to the circumstances of Ireland, and one which, of all others, met the wants, and was calculated to elevate the condition of that country. The Queen's Speech informed us that the attention of Parliament would be called to certain measures for the relief of Ireland, and that those measures would be proposed to us for our adoption. What was the conduct of my noble Friend? My noble Friend was prepared, on coming down the first day of the Session, to propose his measure. He then said—"As Her Majesty's Ministers are themselves about to bring forward measures, and that shortly, I will not run the chance for a moment of appearing to oppose a Government whose general policy, from all which has occurred, and from all which I have observed, I am not only bound, but inclined to support." My noble Friend did not therefore bring forward his measure, matured by the consideration of many months, and by laborious investigation, not alone in this country, and which at least might account for the perfect manner in which the project has now been laid on the Table of the House. Then the measures of Her Majesty's Ministers with respect to Ireland were brought forward. What was the conduct of my noble Friend, and of those who voted with him on that occasion? I am sure Her Majesty's Ministers could not pretend there has been on our part any indication of hostility; and it is not to be denied it would have been easy for my noble Friend, amid encouragement from more than one section of this House, to have viewed inimically the course of the Ministry in their Irish legislation. We said at once, considering the unprecedented circumstances in which the noble Lord (Lord J. Russell) and his Friends ascended to power, considering the unexampled state of things which, installed into power, under those circumstances, they were called upon to control, it would have been an unworthy part to take in any petty spirit—to criticise too severely—the conduct of the Government. It was very easy to criticise the Labour-rate Act; it was very easy, after the event, to suggest a course which might have been pursued with more success; but all we really had to consider was, whether the body of the Gentlemen, under those circumstances, occupying the posts of power and honour, had deported themselves with intelligence, with ability, with energy, and with zeal. We believed they (the Ministers) had deported themselves with intelligence, energy, and zeal; and it was our candid opinion it was very possible, nay more, it was highly probable, that no other body of Gentlemen in the kingdom could have deported themselves with more intelligence, more energy, or with more zeal. But my noble Friend said, when he had listened to the exposition of the Ministerial measures, "I am ready to support your measures; but if I find in detail that they do not carry into effect, so far as I could wish, that remedial course which I think expedient for Ireland, I shall not hesitate to propose another measure not in a competing, not in any hostile, not in an antagonistic, but in an ancillary spirit, and I shall put it before you for your consideration." The noble Lord (Lord J. Russell) knew very well that these were not mere words of rhetoric, uttered in the House of Commons solely to influence a superficial public opinion. The noble Lord knows that, as declared in private as well as in public, my noble Friend had an earnest and sincere conviction that thought he measure might at first startle, it would ultimately be viewed as in harmony with the general design, and that Her Majesty's Ministers, being, perhaps, not opposed to the principle, would consider it with friendly feelings. The noble Lord knows that, so far as our side of the House is concerned, he has heard nothing except in support of the Government. And now, arriving at this position, we are told the existence of the Government depends on the rejection of this measure. But I would say this—when my noble Friend brought forward the measure, when he made a full exposition of its principles and provisions, then was the time for the noble Lord to have risen, and to have said—"This measure is one which I cannot accept—if it is carried I will not be Minister of this country—I divest myself of that responsibility, which under such peculiar circumstances, I accepted—I will throw it upon you, who have evinced no improper ambition—you who have expressed to me in a manner not to be mistaken, your sincere and honourable desire to support me." That was the position which should have been assumed by the Government; that would have been the proper position for the noble Lord to take up. But I maintain, that when the noble Lord rose and permitted the Bill to be brought in, and allowed it to be laid on the Table, then he, and not my noble Friend, became responsible for all which has happened since. I think my noble Friend should not have been described as a man of rampant ambition—as a man wishing to destroy a Government, when he has done nothing but that which all men of honour and spirit, looking to the good opinion of their fellow-subjects, and desirous to maintain their station in public life, would do, viz., having the leave of Her Majesty's Government to bring in a Bill, pursued that Bill to the ultimate point. My noble Friend has confidently placed his case before the House and before the country, and whatever be the result, I am persuaded no conclusion will be drawn unfavourable to the conduct or character of my noble Friend. I am satisfied that this will be the view of the case which, on an impartial retrospect, even those who are now opponents of the Bill will take. Having obtained the permission of the Government to lay the Bill on the Table, it was utterly impossible we could stop short, and say—an insidious whisper had reached us; we have heard of meetings in places of which we know nothing; we have read paragraphs in papers which many never read, and though we have made this exposition in the House of Commons—though we have sent over every part of the empire the outlines of this project for the regeneration of Ireland—and though we have obtained the *quasi* sanction of the Government, we must nevertheless, in a mysterious, shabby, back-stairs spirit, announce that the plan is not to be pursued. Oh, no! that is out of the question; no man of spirit, even though his vote be recorded against us, would or could applaud such a proceeding. The right hon. Gentleman (Mr. Shaw) is going to vote against us, because, although he thinks it very improbable, a belief has arisen that, if a vote is given adverse to the Government, the Government will cease to exist. I see Gentlemen on the other side of the House who entered Parliament the first time with myself—ten years ago—and they will recollect, when they came in they were all told that the Government of that day would not last, because it was going out on an Irish question. That Government did not go out on an Irish question. Two years after that the leader of the most powerful party, at least the most powerful party in opposition, that ever existed in this country, forced to accept office against his will, and resigning, under peculiar circumstances, in three days, that position, announced to that House that he felt that Ireland was his "great difficulty." A Government then again acceded to power which unquestionably was in a minority, not alone as regarded that House, but as regarded the country—a party which, however, although not able to govern England — which generally governs itself — was deemed not only by its own supporters, but, I admit, by some of its opponents, as the only party that could govern Ireland. But the Irish question now before us is not the Irish question of the last ten years. Then the Irish question was, how Ireland is to be governed; now, the Irish question is, how is Ireland to be fed? It will be well for us at this moment, when so much interest is excited about Ireland; when for the first time that the attention of the House has been called to the subject, with none of the passions and less of the prejudices which generally mix themselves up with its consideration, and before we discuss exactly the merits of the project of my noble Friend; to place clearly before us the situation of the country to which the remedy is sought to be applied. If we were to consider the state of Ireland, as we would the state of some island of antiquity in our studies, and yet possessing that ample knowledge which the blue books surrounding us will afford, I am not quite sure that it would be so difficult to form an accurate opinion as hitherto upon the condition of that country. Hitherto we have been discussing whether its political franchises should be increased or diminished; hitherto we have been debating whether its municipal privileges should be sustained or abolished. But if we had remembered that, all this time, we have been considering the state of a country where the population is the densest of any country in the world; where the population, as regarded the arable area, is denser even than in China; where this population is sustained only by the land; if we had remembered also that with this population, so dense, there is the most intense poverty—that if it is not the poorest country in the world, it is certainly the poorest country, relatively, in Europe—that if they have, for example, an amount of circulating and banking capital in Ireland averaging 1*l.* or 30*s.* a head, they have in sterile Scotland an amount averaging 16*l.* a head; if we had known we had to deal with the densest population and the most intense poverty, and that, for the third characteristic, this people were fed on the last resource for human subsistence—we should long ere this have been induced to consider whether an increased number of Members of Parliament—whether an increased number of the electors of Members of Parliament—or whether an increased number of mayors and aldermen—could be cures for evils so strictly social and economical, and, as I now fear, so inveterate and profound. I believe there is now a conviction in the minds of the great body of the people of this country, without reference to creed, or class, or party, that no hallucination—to use the mildest term—has been greater than to suppose that a political panacea can cure the ills of Ireland. The noble Lord (Lord J. Russell), in his general address on the subject of Ireland, some time ago, said, that the state of Ireland was a famine of the 13th century with a population of the 19th; and no doubt that was a very striking and picturesque description; but I am bound to say, that I think it a fallacious one. The famines of the middle ages, the feudal famines, are now pretty well understood; their causes are known. Their consequences struck all classes alike. The Irish famine strikes one class alone, although the most numerous. I believe that the famine of Ireland may find a parallel in a country and in a time much less remote; and I am sorry to say that it is in the dominions of Her Majesty. There is another portion of Her Majesty's dominions where the population is almost as dense, and where the poverty is almost as intense as in Ireland, and where the people depend upon the lowest source of human subsistence. In India, when the rice fails — as when the potato fails in Ireland—we find a state of affairs similar to that which we have now to meet. It is a visitation of Providence; because that all that occurs comes from the Most High, is a truth which none can dispute. But it will not do for this House to use the easy phrase a "visitation of Providence" to conceal its own *laches* in this respect; for what has occurred has been foretold by great statesmen and by men most experienced in Ireland. Lord Wellesley told us years ago, that the potato, and the gradually degenerate state of the potato, till it came to the "lumper," would ultimately destroy Ireland, unless measures were taken to arrest the evil. We may find, in the public papers of Mr. Drummond, the same opinion expressed; and everything now happening in Ireland is, in fact, the occurrence of a contingency which has been foreseen by those who best knew that country, and who were best capable of forming an opinion on the subject. But we have the Government measures to meet the state of affairs. It is not for me to criticise the Government measures. I am their supporter; and—as I hope I shall always be whenever I am a supporter—I am an earnest supporter of those measures. But, as I before ventured to remark, the measure which has been brought forward by my noble Friend the Member for Lynn, is supposed to be quite in accordance with the general theme of the Government system. The measures of Her Majesty's Government, while they alleviate, or attempt to alleviate, immediate distress, indicate the means by which future renovation should be secured; but it did not appear to my noble Friend the Member for Lynn, that their general tendency is such as will either secure that employment which is desirable, or lay the seeds of that future renovation which we all wish to see accomplished. My noble Friend then brought forward this project, which is to give immediate employment to a large mass of the people of Ireland; but which is to have a twofold effect—which is also to give a new character to the country, and so to change the very complexion of that long disordered and unhappy land, that results similar to those which have recently occurred, and under which Ireland is now suffering, may not again happen. I will not dilate, at present at least, upon the character of the measure proposed by my noble Friend. I will, however, advert to the two objects which it proposes to accomplish; and principally, because it is the most urgent, though it can scarcely be called the most important, in its power of affording employment to the people. My noble Friend has made an estimate, framed upon data which he gave to the House without reserve, by which he calculates that under his scheme at least 110,000 able-bodied labourers will be occupied, who will represent a population exceeding 500,000 persons. Although this is not an employment that can cure the ills of Ireland, I am sure there is no hon. Gentleman present who will not acknowledge, that if we can secure such an employment, especially if it be a *quasi* permanent employment, we shall afford an immense alleviation of the present pressure upon the Government and resources of this country. Now, the proposal of my noble Friend has been met by, I will not say an able, but an extremely zealous opposition. It must not be supposed, however, that I intend to say that that opposition is not able in an offensive sense. I am sure that the hon. Gentlemen who have conducted the opposition to the measure, have made the best of the means of resistance they possess; but I think I may be able to induce the House to hesitate before it comes to the opinion that that opposition is really an effective one. The right hon. Gentleman the Member of the Government who first addressed the House on this subject, raised an initial objection to the project, which seemed to have existed on the very back of the Bill. It was found that the Bill was introduced, not merely by the noble Lord the Member for Lynn, by my noble Friend the Member for Stamford (the Marquess of Granby), who addressed the House with so much ability to-night; but by the hon. Member for Sunderland, who is considered a great authority upon railway matters; and by another hon. Gentleman, the Member for Westmoreland, who is known to be one of the largest manufacturers of iron in England; and that was the first objection raised by the Chancellor of the Exchequer against the measure. I am quite willing to admit that the Chancellor of the Exchequer did not impute, even by inference, any corrupt motives to my hon. Friends. All that the right hon. Gentleman said, was this: "There is not the slightest doubt that the peculiar occupations of these Gentlemen have given a bias to their judgment." As a philosophical proposition, there are few Gentlemen present who will dispute that assertion. We all know the magical fascination of an engrossing pursuit; it certainly does give a tone to the judgment. It is not at all impossible that a man always studying one subject, will view the general affairs of the world through the coloured prism of his usual atmosphere; but though I am not disposed to deny that the hon. Member for Sunderland and the hon. Member for Westmoreland may perhaps have viewed the circumstances brought under their consideration with the inevitable influence of a paramount idea, still I must remind the Chancellor of the Exchequer that it is not merely makers of railways, and creators of railways, and manufacturers of iron, who have one pursuit; there may be a peculiar body of men in the State who follow one pursuit, and fill one office; and when I find three Chancellors of the Exchequer rising one after the other to oppose this measure, I am disposed to view that financial opposition with some jealousy. But whatever may be my feelings on this subject, I will merely allude to it in passing; especially when reasons have been adduced by the Gentlemen to whom I refer, which leave me no excuse for travelling for a moment out of the record of a strict reply. The right hon. Member for Portsmouth (Mr. F. Baring), who came forward in a most gallant spirit, and with all the sympathetic reminiscences of official life, said, in answer to the hon. Member for Newark, that he (Mr. Stuart) had made a declamatory speech, but that he had given no reply to the unanswerable statements of the Chancellor of the Exchequer. The speech of the Chancellor of the Exchequer might have been unanswerable, but it was also unproved. I understood, throwing aside many petty objections raised by the Chancellor of the Exchequer, that the opposition of that right hon. Gentleman to the proposal of the noble Lord (Lord G. Bentinck) was based upon two principal grounds: first, that the quantity of capital which the noble Lord anticipated would be expended upon labour in Ireland would not be so appropriated; and, secondly, that the number of men employed on the railroads would be much smaller than was calculated by my noble Friend. This, in fact, is the same objection in two forms; because if my noble Friend can show that his calculations are correct, or rather understated, then it follows, that if so much more capital will be expended in labour, so many more men will be employed, and the converse of that proposition will stand. I am bound to say, that the Chancellor of the Exchequer made his speech in a very bold and dashing spirit. It certainly was in a style not generally heard from Chancellors of the Exchequer; indeed, so courageous was its spirit, that I should rather have expected to hear it from the Secretary at War or the Paymaster of the Forces, at least. But the right hon. Gentleman stated most positively, that the noble Member for Lynn and his Friends are quite wrong; and he asserted that the proportion of capital expended on railroads was only 25 per cent. The right hon. Gentleman did not condescend to offer any proof on this point; he did not allege any evidence, or present the House with any data; but he said, "You are perfectly wrong. I have been told"—though he did not name his authority—"that the proportion of capital expended is only 25 per cent, and that the utmost you can expect is that 1,000*l*. a mile will employ forty-five men." Now, I think these are not subjects which can be treated upon the *ipse dixit* of any man. I am not a railroad director, nor have I a single share in those undertakings, and I admit that all my knowledge on this subject has been derived within a few months, since my attention has been directed to this matter; but I had thought it impossible that any man, whether a Chancellor of the Exchequer, or a railroad director, could have got up in his place and have made such a declaration as has been made by the right hon. Gentleman (the Chancellor of the Exchequer), and suppose that it would really influence public opinion. But still more extraordinary is it that one Chancellor of the Exchequer should have another Chancellor of the Exchequer to be his bail and guarantee in such an argument. I now come to the consideration—a vital one—of the employment given to labourers by the expenditure of money in making railroads. I will read to the House very shortly a most important document, which is, I think, quite conclusive on the subject. Here is a paper which is an analysis of the items of expenditure on the greatest existing railways in this country and on the Continent. I know the vast and multifarious documents from which it has been drawn up, and I think I can vouch for its accuracy—I am sure I can vouch for the good faith with which it has been compiled; and when I mention to the House, that

I am indebted for it to my learned friend Mr. Laing, I am certain they will be satisfied that it is an accurate and *bonâ fide* statement. There is given in it an analysis of each description of expenditure incurred upon a dear line in England, and also upon a cheap one; likewise upon all the Belgian railways; and upon the Paris and Rouen—one of the most complete lines in France. The total expenditure per mile on the London and Birmingham Railway was 49,650*l.* Of this, there was expended on law, Parliamentary, engineering, and direction, 2,150*l.*; and on land and compensation, 6,300*l.*; giving an average of 17 per cent out of the 49,650*l.* Of items indirectly connected with skilled labour, there was, on the carrying department, 3,000*l.*, and for the permanent way, 5,650*l.*; giving 26 per cent; and on the items connected immediately with labour, such as earthworks, and stations, and the like, out of the 49,655*l.* that was expended, 32,630*l.*, or 62 per cent. That is an account of a dear line of railway; and I will now take a cheap English one. The total expenditure of the Grand Junction was 21,200*l.* per mile, and the items unconnected with labour were 17 per cent; the items directly connected with skilled labour were 26 per cent; while those connected with common labour were 50 per cent. On the Belgian railways the total expenditure per mile was 16,130*l.*; and the items connected with common labour per mile was 6,920*l.*, or 43 per cent. On the Paris and Rouen Railway the expenditure per mile was 22,500*l.*; and, out of that, there was paid for common labour 12,570*l.*, or 56 per cent; giving an average on the whole of these railways, in England, in Belgium, and in France, of 57 per cent on common labour. I will now call the attention of the House to the declaration of the right hon. Gentleman the Chancellor of the Exchequer, who estimates the expenditure for labour on railways at only 25 per cent. If we take the Irish railroads at 16,000*l.* per mile, and allow 57 per cent as the average expended on labour, or 9,120*l.* per mile, which, spread over a period of four years, is 2,280*l.* annually; and if we take the Chancellor of the Exchequer's statement, that for every 1,000*l.* per mile there are 45 men employed, it is clear that, according to the right hon. Gentleman's data, there will be employed for every 1,000*l.* expended per mile 102 persons for four years; that will make, on 1,500 miles of railway, 153,000 labourers, instead of 110,000, as my noble Friend calculated; and, supposing five persons dependent on each of these labourers, that will make, according to the principle of the Chancellor of the Exchequer, 765,000 people deriving their means of subsistence from these works. I beg to say, that when my noble Friend estimated the employment of the people at the rate of 60 per mile, he under-estimated his case; for I have documents in my possession which show that the number is much larger. My noble Friend the Member for Stamford referred to page 35 of the blue book, containing the proceedings of the Board of Works; and I, also, will refer to that volume, in which we find, from the memorial of the Lord Mayor of Dublin, that 40,000 persons were, in October, 1846, employed on railroads in Ireland; but in October, 1846, there were only 300 miles of railroad in progress. Now, taking the number stated in that memorial to be employed on 300 miles as the data, and applying the same calculation to 1,500 miles, it will give employment to 200,000 persons. I conclude, however, that the estimate taken from the data of the Chancellor of the Exchequer, and the data taken from the lines of England, Belgium, and France, are extremely within the limits; and, since I have come into the House, I have found, in the *Irish Railway Gazette and Commercial Advertiser*, a statement to the effect, that, on the works on the main line of the Great Southern and Western Railway, 33 miles from Dublin, there are 8,600 men constantly employed on 47 miles, giving 183 men per mile. So much for the statement of the Chancellor of the Exchequer, that only one-fourth of the capital of a railway is invested in labour. According to the estimates founded on the expenditure of the English, Belgian, and French lines, there would not be less than 3,000,000*l.* expended on unskilled labour in Ireland for four successive years under the proposal of my noble Friend. And suppose that the navigator is a man who has a wife and family, not only shall we employ 102 persons per mile for 1,500 miles, but I will show that the estimates they have taken of five persons maintained by each man's labour, is as much understated as the general statement of my noble Friend. I think the House must wish that this question should be fairly put before them; and I will read for its information a document full of knowledge of the subject, written in a straightforward spirit, and in the most perfect simplicity, and altogether so conclusive that I am sure they will not regret the time occupied by reading it. It is a letter, dated February 8, 1847, from one who has much acquaintance with the subject of railways, and great experience of Ireland, and who has no knowledge of the noble Lord to whom the letter is addressed. The writer said—

> "It is scarcely possible to overrate the benefits which would result to Ireland from the passing of the Bill now brought into Parliament by your Lordship. Allow me to trespass shortly on your Lordship's time while I endeavour to refute two of the principal objections which appear to be raised against the measure, which I think the experience I have had in that country will enable me to do. The first is, that if railways in Ireland were at once undertaken upon a large scale, English 'navvies' would be brought in by contractors, and, by superseding the labour of the country, greatly decrease the relief thereby sought to be given to the existing distress. For the greater part of the last five years I have been living near Londonderry, executing very large works, which are peculiarly adapted to the labourers of that country, when once they are taught, and which a very few weeks serve to accomplish; namely, the making of very large embankments to reclaim land from the sea, and on the Londonderry and Coleraine Railway. On commencing these, I found the difficulties almost insuperable, from the total unacquaintance of the people with the nature of such works; I fortunately persevered, and with beneficial results to them and to myself. I brought over a few experienced gaugers, who, in a few weeks, instructed the more intelligent, who, in their turn, taught others; and the men now employed are almost exclusively Irish, and are quite capable of executing any works of the sort. I have now about 1,000 men employed; and, if the company would furnish the means, I could at once greatly increase the number, and in a month or six weeks from this time I could take on between 3,000 and 4,000 more; and to enable me to do this, I should not require additional English labourers of any description. There are some works in which it is to the interest of contractors to employ high-priced labour; these works, from the nature of the country, are almost unknown on the Irish railways. I have, on the Coleraine line, I believe, almost the only tunnel in Ireland, which is a very difficult one, being nearly 1,000 yards in length, through the solid basalt rock. To commence it, I brought over some experienced men, and added the necessary number of local labourers, who very soon became sufficiently expert to continue the works without such supervision and assistance. All the Englishmen but three have returned to England—the works, with this exception, are carried on exclusively by Irishmen, entirely to my satisfaction and to that of the resident engineer of the company. Many of those men are now earning 3*s.* per day, and several men have left me at different times to undertake sub-contracts in other places, for which they have become capable, after two or three months' instruction, although previously totally unaccustomed to the work. The works, generally, on this line, are of a difficult description. On the Londonderry and Enniskillen, fifteen miles of which are completed, there are still forty-five miles to make, the works being of the ordinary description, and upon which some thousands of Irish labourers could be immediately and beneficially employed. The number of Englishmen now employed by me does not exceed 2½ per cent on the whole, and these are principally engine-drivers and mechanics. Another objection raised is, that the counties through which the railways pass are not the most distressed, and therefore the works on them would not relieve those parts of the country which require it most. I believe that the comparatively small amount of distress, which till very lately existed in the neighbourhood of Londonderry, has arisen chiefly, if not solely, from the employment at improved wages on the works of the two railways connected with that city. I should add, that when I first went there, the average price for labour was 1*s.* per day; but that now, and for a long time past, it is 1*s.* 6*d.* per day, and in many instances higher. I have always found that, when I required an increase of labourers, the fact soon became known, and, in a very short time, they came out of Connaught and the western coast. If all the able-bodied men remain in those parts, the farmers will of course employ them first, and thousands who can find no employment must be fed by charity, or starve; whereas, if the able-bodied men came down to the railway works—which, from my own experience, I am convinced they would, if they were certain of employment at good wages—they would afterwards return with their earnings, and, in the mean time, the farmers would absorb the whole or greater part of the remaining local labour, and the entire community would be benefited. Previously to going to Ireland, I had, during several years, very large contracts, both on the London and Birmingham and the Bristol and Exeter Railways, exceeding in value 500,000*l.*, and having frequently employed above 3,000 men at one time. I mention this fact to satisfy your Lordship that I am not ignorant of the comparative difference between works of this sort in England and Ireland. In these observations, which I thus venture respectfully to submit to your Lordship, I feel satisfied that Mr. Dargan, who has the largest contracts in Ireland, and the other large contractors in that country, would fully concur."

That document, coming from an Englishman, Mr. Samuel Hemming, extensively engaged upon railways in Ireland, and who tells us that he can employ Irish labourers to so great an extent, is well worth listening to. It completely answers all the vague and shadowy objections of a late, a later, and the latest Chancellor of the Exchequer. The writer tells us that the mere Irish labourer is sufficient for the construction of these railways; that there are only 2½ per cent of English labourers employed upon his works; that he could employ 1,000 more Irish labourers; that they were perfectly capable for that kind of labour; that, in a few weeks, they were capable of making even tunnels; and that when he wanted more men, they came from Connaught and the western coast. But then, it was said that these navigators were gay Lotharios—that they were not family men—that they were all Englishmen—and that they had left a wife and family at home. Now, I find that they are almost all Irish; and I have, within the last hour, had a letter put into my hands by the doorkeeper of this House, from an Irish gentleman, which almost raised a blush in my face as I read it, and which I will, with the permission of the House, read. The writer is Sir Harvey Bruce; and his letter is another reply to the "unanswerable" speech of the Chancellor of the Exchequer. It is as follows:—

> "Having remarked that the Chancellor of the Exchequer is reported to have stated that most of the men employed on Irish railways are unmarried, I take the liberty of writing to inform you, that I happen to be chairman of a relief district through which the Londonderry and Coleraine Railway passes; and although the works are not carried on extensively, yet they very considerably relieve our destitute poor; and that the great majority of the labourers on the railway and in the country are married, as they all marry when they are boys, and many of the poor on our books have families of from eight to twelve; and a father and mother and three children is considered a very small family."

So that it seems these desperate navigators, who left their wives and families in England, are, after all, Irish "boys"—men who had wives of their own, and with such a progeny of boys, that, if the Government would pass this measure, the railways would take off their hands the 580,000 persons whom the Government had taken into their pay. The letter continued—

> "I know many instances of labourers, who were before earning only 10*d.* or 1*s.* a day, earning at the railway 2*s.* 6*d.* and 3*s.* 6*d.* a day, and less skilful labourers 1*s.* 8*d.* a day. To show the low price of land, the railway goes through nine miles of my estate, and they have bought their line rather under 600*l.* a mile."

Here is new data for the Chancellor of the Exchequer, when he again estimates the amount to be given for land. I think that rather an interesting document. The writer does not mean to say that all the poor in his district have from nine to twelve children; but he gives us some reason to believe that the flashy style of assertion which we have heard from the other side—all supported, of course, by official documents, and, of course, confirmed on this side of the House, echoing from cliff to cliff, on each side of the Speaker's chair —is not all to be taken for gospel, which is at once to settle the question. It was impossible to escape from the Chancellor of the Exchequer. The right hon. Gentleman has remarked upon the name of the hon. Member for Sunderland being attached to the Bill, as if that hon. Member had been the originator of the Bill, when I know that my noble Friend is exclusively entitled to the credit of this measure, and that my noble Friend applied to the hon. Member for Sunderland. But what would the Chancellor of the Exchequer have said if the name of the hon. Member for Sunderland had not been on the Bill? He would have said, "You have an experienced man in your party, who knows more about railways than perhaps any other man in the kingdom. He is a practical man, who presides over 45,000,000*l.* of capital invested in railways; and he knows that your proposal is so preposterous, that it could not be maintained." The right hon. Member for Portsmouth (Mr. F. T. Baring) and the Member for the University of Cambridge (Mr. Goulburn) would, no doubt, have readily supported that opinion. The Chancellor of the Exchequer said, that unskilled labour was not employed in making the Irish railways, and therefore—the right hon. Gentleman is always ready with his therefore, and I, for one, admire the dashing rapidity of his conclusions—and therefore railways would do nothing for the good of Ireland. I have shown that nothing but unskilled labour, if that of Irish labourers is to be so called, is employed upon these lines. I will not say what the Chancellor of the Exchequer said, that the money advanced to Ireland has never been repaid. I leave that question to be settled between the Chancellor of the Exchequer and some champion of Irish repeal. But when it was said that railways would give employment to the destitute, and give a new tone to the country, they were told in reply, that money had formerly been lent to widen the streets of some corrupt Irish corporation, and that it had never been repaid. They had been told too that it had; but what do I care whether it has, or whether it has not? No doubt the Government who lent the money had two good Members returned for that borough, with whom they had a perfect good understanding when they lent the money. And these are the instances and precedents brought forward to meet the supporters of this Bill; these are the circumstantial arguments and accurate data that we have to encounter: and we are told that the case shall be decided on its merits. Let it be decided on its merits; but do not talk about the broad streets of Cork, when the question is of of the broad gauge through Ireland. We have no cause, however to complain of the Chancellor of the Exchequer. It would be difficult to meet with a more candid opponent than the right hon. Gentleman. I am quite content to take the case as the right hon. Gentleman has made it out; and if this Bill will only, according to the right hon. Gentleman's own statement, make half Ireland rich, that will be quite enough for me; for if it were said that an inexperienced party, which had nevertheless shaken the Government to its centre, had succeeded so far in its first project as to make half Ireland rich, it could not be said that such a party had failed. They would have done enough for one Session. What body of men, I should like to know—whether Ministers that are, or Ministers that were—have ever made half Ireland rich? I will now come to the second great branch of the subject; for multifarious as are the objections to this plan, if those of the smaller order are taken away, it will be found that they range themselves under three great heads; and, strange to say, each of these arguments is represented by a Chancellor of the Exchequer. First, there is the real Chancellor of the Exchequer, who tells us that under the proposed Bill there will be no employment for labour at all; or at all events, no great employment. Then comes the right hon. Gentleman who was formerly Chancellor of the Exchequer, and who represents the objection of monetary disturbance. And lastly comes the right hon. Gentleman who was lately Chancellor of the Exchequer, and who represents the great principle of non-interference with private enterprise. Of the first objection, namely, the incommensurate employment of labour, I have already disposed, and I therefore next come to that which was founded on the fear of a monetary crisis—of the danger to the State—especially at a time when the finances are supposed to be or likely to be disordered, or, at least, when there will be some unusal claims upon them—of entering into these speculations. I will deal with this argument as I have done with the other, not by abstract reasoning, but by an appeal to facts, which I will put before the House, leaving them to draw their deductions. I will not notice the slight passing observation of the right hon. Gentleman, that our Railway Board will not report in favour of any one of the lines; which would, at any rate, be answer to all his apprehensions; but I will come at once to the precedents to be drawn from the Belgian and French lines, and the warning that is to be drawn from them as to the effect of raising money by loan for railway enterprise. First, I will take the case of Belgium; and I will beg to recall to the minds of hon. Members, what was the financial state of Belgium at the time to which I am about to refer, because it will afford a perfect answer to the right hon. Gentleman's argument. In the year 1840, the Belgian Government determined to create railroads by virtue of a grant from the State; and the State granted, in round numbers, 6,000,000*l.* sterling for that purpose. Out of that 6,000,000*l.* about 2,700,000*l.* were instantly raised by loan by the State. And this was at a time when the annual revenue of that State was only 3,300,000*l.* Now, that sum of 2,700,000*l.* was raised by a 5 per cent loan on terms which cost the State only 5*l.* 6*s.* 8*d.* per 100*l.* Two years after this —in the year 1842—Belgium raised its second loan of 1,000,000*l.*, part of the original grant of 6,000,000*l.*, and in pursuance of the first loan of 2,700,000*l.*; and now, after two years had elapsed, and the former sum had been raised so short a time before, at what rate was this second loan raised? Notwithstanding the natural effect of such an operation as the first in depreciating the Government securities, they raised the second loan at 4*l.* 17*s.* 4*d.* per cent. That was to say, the value of the national securities was regarded as being 11¼ per cent higher than before, the Government having raised in the course of two years a sum more than the whole annual revenue of the country. Such was the effect of the Government assisting railway enterprise, by way of loan in Belgium. I will now come to France; and as I believe the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Portsmouth (Mr. Baring) has very ample knowledge of that country, I must say I was surprised that he should have ventured on the argument the right hon. Gentleman has used. I remember having been in France in 1842, which was a very critical year in the finances of that country. France had at that time a floating debt of 17,500,000*l.* sterling, in consequence of the fortifications of Paris. It was under those circumstances, that the Minister proposed to the Chambers a grant of 19,000,000*l.* sterling for railroads in France, thus creating a further debt of 19,000,000*l.*, in addition to the 17,500,000*l.* That sum of 19,000,000*l.* was raised thus —18,000,000*l.* by loan, and 1,000,000*l.* by Royal bonds, equivalent to our Exchequer-bills. Now, what was the effect in France of this operation, and that, too, under such peculiar circumstances? In 1841, the proceeds of the indirect taxation of France were something like 28,000,000*l.*; but what was the indirect taxation in 1846? Why, it amounted to much more than 34,000,000*l.*, leaving indeed a balance in favour of last year of 6,400,000*l.* Such was the consequence of the spur given to industry in France by the introduction of railroads, under circumstances infinitely more difficult than those with which we now have to contend. France, by these acts, created a floating debt of nearly 40,000,000*l.* sterling, and France has been paid over and over again. But what has she not gained in the legitimate and salutary increase of her indirect taxation, through the increased production and consumption stimulated by this grant? Since then, as is well known, there has been no increase of direct taxes in France. Yet this was that France which the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Portsmouth brought forward to school us with. When the right hon. Gentleman was Chancellor of the Exchequer, could he refer to a revenue like that? Could he refer to a state of the Treasury like that? It would have been enough to make his mouth water, even to think of it. But this is not all I have to say to these Chancellors of the Exchequer, who have come forward to settle this question with the reckless *ipse dixit* of official arrogance. The Government of France, also, it appeared, "took care of the interests of the people" in establishing their railways. They did not allow the people to pay for their seats at the rate they had to pay in those infamous jobs in Ireland. This was what was put forward in favour of the French railways as against those of Ireland. But I hold in my hand a comparative statement of the rate of fares in the two, from which the House will be able to judge as to their relative cheapness. It appears that of the first-class fares, while the French rate is 1·66, the Ulster Railway is 1·44. For the second class, while the French is as 1·25, the Dublin and Drogheda is as 1·0, and the Ulster as 0·96; and, for the third class, while the French is as 0·92, the Ulster is as 0·64, and the Dublin and Drogheda as 0·56. So that on the Irish railways, it seems, they pay less than they pay in France. The French railways, it should be remembered, are at the same time cheaper than the Belgian. But this is not all. The right hon. Member for Portsmouth tells us that we are creating an immense monopoly. Look at France. Why, every railroad in France is leased for a term of at least forty years: until the expiration of that time Government cannot interfere. How different in this country. Why, under the provisions of Mr. Strutt's Bill, Government assumes a right to revise the tariff of every railroad once every ten years. And yet we are to be told of France. Really it is too much for statements like these to be made by two men of such experience and management of public affairs. But see how they were actually made. First, the right hon. Gentleman the Chancellor of the Exchequer gets up and makes a most unauthorized statement. According to him only 25 per cent of the whole capital of a line will go to the employment of labour; and then, warmed by the fire of his flashing rhetoric, he goes on to tell us that twenty-five men only will be employed upon each mile of rail. Not a single fact does he offer. Not a single proof does he adduce. But what was the magnificent peroration of the "unanswerable speech?" Why it was—that on the whole—taking a common sense and practical view of the case—they are all practical men these Chancellors of the Exchequer—he could assure the House that not more than twenty-five men would be required per mile. Now it so happens that I have seen persons well informed upon the subject—it so happens that I have seen a scientific, and in all respects competent individual, who came to me, who said, "I believe I am the anonymous—[*laughter*]—I am the anonymous person whom the Chancellor of the Exchequer has consulted, and I am in the greatest distress. He has made such a mistake—the most enormous blunder ever committed by a public functionary." He went on—this anonymous authority—he said, "I told him that twenty-five men would be employed per mile, but I meant permanently employed." Now we only supposed that ten men per mile would be thus employed. I told him so. He said, "Yes, your noble Friend has understated his case throughout; but I tell you, as I told the Chancellor of the Exchequer, that twenty-five men would be permanently employed per mile." And so it was. The right hon. Gentleman comes down, makes his speech, gets a majority, saves the Government, and ruins Ireland, all with this story of twenty-five men per mile. Another and another still succeeds, and still I have to deal with the third Chancellor of the Exchequer. Now I come to the Gentleman who will not interfere with private enterprise. I come, therefore, to the question of private enterprise; and I think it highly important that we should arrive at some clear understanding of this great social and economical principle. Now one very remarkable circumstance is, that every night you hear a statesman—a present or a late adviser of the Crown—rise to denounce interference with private enterprise; and yet every night I find the same men supporting measures which do directly interfere with private enterprise. Why there is not, in this point of view, an objection against the tenor of the plan of my noble Friend, that is not fatal to the scheme of Government. But I do not dwell on this. But let us really understand this question of private enterprise. It may throw a great light upon the main subject. I can understand why, as a principle, interference with private enterprise is deprecated: what do you mean by non-interference? This, that you believe that in a country like England the commercial principle is able to cope with and control all circumstances with which it comes into contact. Am I right? I believe that you cannot have a more efficient organ than dealing with the commercial principle in commercial circumstances. Suppose a man in this country is about to construct a railroad. All he has got to do is to calculate the cost and probable profits. He knows the amount of Parliamentary expenses, rather indefinite though they be; he knows the cost of land, of timber, of iron; he calculates what will be the rate of labour, and then he undertakes his work. All he has got to do is to estimate cost and profit. The commercial principle deals merely with commercial circumstances; and I can understand why in such cases the State ought not to interfere. But if a man makes a railroad in Ireland, he has not merely to calculate the cost of land, but he has to buy the land under so complicated a tenure, that the result of the transaction is often public rancour and private animosities. He has to engage labour which lives upon a casual supply; and he knows that if by any visitation of Providence that supply be cut off, that the State has made no provision for the catastrophe. He knows that instead of allowing his men to go to church or chapel as they like, as he would in England, he is labouring in a land where religious animosities run to such a height that the most rancorous feelings are often engendered. He knows that he may some day meet a party procession which his men may join instead of going to work. He is served when he has commenced operations with threatening notices. His stewards or principal men are shot from behind hedges. Why, Sir, these are not commercial circumstances! The commercial principle cannot cope with these circumstances. The commercial principle does not work in Ireland. Whatever may be our opinion as to the cause of Irish disturbances, this is not the time to inquire into it, be it Protestant ascendancy or Popish supremacy—the tenure of land or the want of manufactures—one thing is certain: all men agree that Ireland has been misgoverned. And who has misgoverned her? The State. It is the conduct of the State, past or present, that prevents the free action of the commercial principle in Ireland; it is the State, therefore, that should step in to alleviate the injury and inconveniences it has produced; and therefore the political principle in Ireland must be called into the assistance of the commercial principle. This is the *rationale* of interfering with private enterprise in Ireland. And yet you lay it down that you are to act in Ireland as you would do in England. I deny that by interfering in Ireland, you would interfere with private enterprise. There is no private enterprise to be interfered with. But the last Chancellor of the Exchequer told us that on looking over the list of Irish railway proprietors, he found that most of the names were those of English capitalists; and he immediately deduced from that fact the inference that Ireland did not require Government aid. Why, Sir, it proves the very reverse. It proves that the railroads begun are good commercial speculations stopped by political circumstances, which interfere with the commercial principle. The proof is a fair one, that the undertakings are such as would pay the State. But there must be something more powerful and comprehensive than private enterprise set to work. Go on, if you please, maundering about private enterprise; trust to it, and Ireland will remain as she is, three centuries behind. The measure of my noble Friend has sought to supply that to Ireland which we believe that private enterprise cannot supply. We have been told that it is a partial measure. The course which we have taken shows that it is not. At all events, the debate has proved that all agree upon the one point of the advantage of railroads to Ireland. We have shown you that our measures will employ a great deal of labour in Ireland. We are prepared to show you that its advantages do not merely consist in employing labour, but in opening new markets for other kinds of labour. For example, you will have railroads passing over the largest coal field in the kingdom—that of Mallow; and do you believe that five years will then pass over without that coal field being worked. Is not fuel as important as food—is it not as necessary? The railway will make it attainable—make it plentiful and cheap. But need I dwell on the different sorts of industry which it will develop? Do not let the House understand that in that respect our case is incomplete. We could show you how our scheme would create new trades—open new markets—rear new residences—give an impulse to the fisheries which no projector has yet dreamed of—we could show how it would give a new character, a new face, to Ireland. I remember a Member of this House—a Member before I sat in it—well known to all of you, and whose memory is cherished by you all; a gallant officer and a humourist; who propounded the theory that the only cure for the woes of Ireland would be to sink it for twenty-four hours under water. Sir, without resorting to the painful results of this diluvian process, we propose to give a new face to the country—a new character to the people—a new tone to the age in which they live; and whatever may be the present result, although I suppose we may no longer hope to be able to carry this measure immediately, yet ultimately it will be successful. I can conceive, Sir, an hon. Member sacrificing his convictions to his party; but he should be an English Whig, not an Irish Repealer. I do not think that this is a case in which an Irish Member ought to refuse his sanction to a measure, than which no political agitator—and I do not use the word in an offensive sense—than which no political agitator—be he Repealer or Imperialist—who has ever appealed to his countrymen, has ever ventured to propose one half as comprehensive, or a quarter as practical. I can only say, thanking the House for the kindness with which they have listened to me, that whatever may be the result, though I cannot pretend we shall be free from the nobler pang of political disappointment, we shall at least be exempt from the bitterness of personal mortification; for we shall have failed in carrying a measure which no one can pretend was conceived in the spirit of faction, or matured by the calculating craft of a scheming ambition—a measure that was brought forward in good faith, and would have served a great cause—a measure which did not aim to injure a Government, but which did aspire to benefit a nation.

Debate again adjourned.

House adjourned at half-past Twelve.

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TO

HANSARD'S PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES,

VOLUME LXXXIX.

BEING THE FIRST VOLUME OF SESSION 1847.

Explanation of the Abbreviations.

1R, 2R. 3R. First, Second, or Third Reading—*Amend.*, Amendment.—*Res.*, Resolution.—*Com.* Committed.—*Re-Com.*, Re-committed.—*Rep.*, Reported.—*Adj.*, Adjourned.—*cl.*, Clause.—*add. cl.* Additional Clause.—*neg.*, Negatived.—*l.*, Lords.—*c.*, Commons.—*m. q.*, Main Question.—*o. q.* Original Question.—*o. m.*, Original Motion.—*p. q.*, Previous Question.—*r. p.*, Report Progress—*A.*, Ayes.—*N.*, Noes—*M.*, Majority.—1*st Div.*, 2*nd Div.*, First or Second Division.

☞ *The * indicates that no Debate took place upon that Reading.*

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